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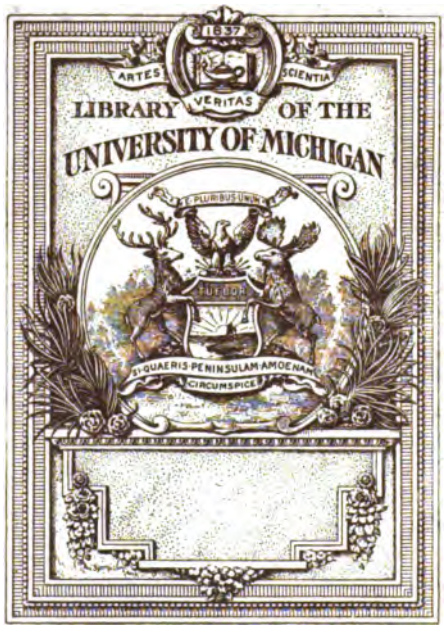
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THE WORKS AND LIFE OF WALTER BAGEHOT

VOL. VIII.

THE WORKS AND LIFE

OF

WALTER BAGEHOT

EDITED BY

MRS. RUSSELL BARRINGTON

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ERRATA.

Page 190, line 24, *for* student, during *read* student, concerned during
,, 191, ,, 12, ,, anything *read* anything,
,, 191, ,, 13, ,, approximating equal *read* approximately equal
,, 192, ,, 9, ,, nor . . . nor *read* or . . . or
,, 194, ,, 6, ,, them we mean not *read* them, we mean, not
,, 195, ,, 10, ,, one we think is *read* one, we think, is
,, 196, ,, 23, ,, was *read* were
,, 198, paragraph 2, line 11, *for* used, often *read* used often,
,, 214, line 13, *for* each . . . are *read* each . . . is
,, 218, ,, 13, ,, cause of *read* causes
,, 227, ,, 18, ,, encounter *read* counter
,, 229, ,, 4, ,, affect *read* affects
,, 233, ,, 8, ,, Study, *read* Study
,, 235, ,, 7, delete comma after unharmonious
,, 236, ,, 7 from end, *for* need *read* needs

PHYSICS AND POLITICS.

(1872.)

No. I.

THE PRELIMINARY AGE.

I.

ONE peculiarity of this age is the sudden acquisition of much physical knowledge. There is scarcely a department of science or art which is the same, or at all the same, as it was fifty years ago. A new world of inventions—of railways and of telegraphs—has grown up around us which we cannot help seeing; a new world of ideas is in the air and affects us, though we do not see it. A full estimate of these effects would require a great book, and I am sure I could not write it; but I think I may usefully, in a few papers, show how, upon one or two great points, the new ideas are modifying two old sciences—politics and political economy. Even upon these points my ideas must be incomplete, for the subject is novel; but, at any rate, I may suggest some conclusions, and so show what is requisite even if I do not supply it.

If we wanted to describe one of the most marked results, perhaps the most marked result, of late thought, we should say that by it everything is made "an antiquity". When, in former times, our ancestors thought of an antiquarian, they described him as occupied with coins, and medals, and Druids' stones; these were then the characteristic records of the decipherable past, and it was with these that decipherers busied themselves. But now there are other relics; indeed, all matter is become such. Science tries to find in each bit of earth the record of the causes which made it precisely what it is; those forces have left their trace, she knows, as much as the tact and hand of the artist left their mark on a classical gem. It would

be tedious (and it is not in my way) to reckon up the ingenious questionings by which geology has made part of the earth, at least, tell part of its tale; and the answers would have been meaningless if physiology and conchology and a hundred similar sciences had not brought their aid. Such subsidiary sciences are to the decipherer of the present day what old languages were to the antiquary of other days; they construe for him the words which he discovers, they give a richness and a truth-like complexity to the picture which he paints, even in cases where the particular detail they tell is not much. But what here concerns me is that man himself has, to the eye of science, become "an antiquity". She tries to read, is beginning to read, knows she ought to read, in the frame of each man the result of a whole history of all his life, of what he is and what makes him so,—of all his forefathers, of what they were and of what made them so. Each nerve has a sort of memory of its past life, is trained or not trained, dulled or quickened, as the case may be; each feature is shaped and characterised, or left loose and meaningless, as may happen; each hand is marked with its trade and life, subdued to what it works in—*if we could but see it.*

It may be answered that in this there is nothing new; that we always knew how much a man's past modified a man's future; that we all knew how much a man is apt to be like his ancestors; that the existence of national character is the greatest commonplace in the world; that when a philosopher cannot account for anything in any other manner, he boldly ascribes it to an occult quality in some race. But what physical science does is, not to discover the hereditary element, but to render it distinct,—to give us an accurate conception of what we may expect, and a good account of the evidence by which we are led to expect it. Let us see what that science teaches on the subject; and, as far as may be, I will give it in the words of those who have made it a professional study, both that I may be more sure to state it rightly and vividly, and because—as I am about to apply these principles to subjects which are my own pursuit—I would rather have it quite clear that I have not made my premises to suit my own conclusions.

1st, then, as respects the individual, we learn as follows:—

"Even while the cerebral hemispheres are entire, and in full possession of their powers, the brain gives rise to actions which are as completely reflex as those of the spinal cord.

"When the eyelids wink at a flash of light, or a threatened blow, a reflex action takes place, in which the afferent nerves are the optic, the efferent, the facial. When a bad smell causes a grimace, there is a reflex action through the same motor nerve, while the olfactory nerves constitute the afferent channels. In these cases, therefore, reflex action must be effected through the brain, all the nerves involved being cerebral.

"When the whole body starts at a loud noise, the afferent auditory nerve gives rise to an impulse which passes to the medulla oblongata, and thence affects the great majority of the motor nerves of the body.

"It may be said that these are mere mechanical actions, and have nothing to do with the acts which we associate with intelligence. But let us consider what takes place in such an act as reading aloud. In this case, the whole attention of the mind is, or ought to be, bent upon the subject-matter of the book; while a multitude of most delicate muscular actions are going on, of which the reader is not in the slightest degree aware. Thus the book is held in the hand, at the right distance from the eyes; the eyes are moved, from side to side, over the lines, and up and down the pages. Further, the most delicately adjusted and rapid movements of the muscles of the lips, tongue, and throat, of laryngeal and respiratory muscles, are involved in the production of speech. Perhaps the reader is standing up and accompanying the lecture with appropriate gestures. And yet every one of these muscular acts may be performed with utter unconsciousness, on his part, of anything but the sense of the words in the book. In other words, they are reflex acts.

"The reflex actions proper to the spinal cord itself are *natural*, and are involved in the structure of the cord and the properties of its constituents. By the help of the brain we may acquire an affinity of *artificial* reflex actions. That is to say, an action may require all our attention and all our volition

for its first, or second, or third performance, but by frequent repetition it becomes, in a manner, part of our organisation, and is performed without volition, or even consciousness.

"As every one knows, it takes a soldier a very long time to learn his drill—to put himself, for instance, into the attitude of 'attention' at the instant the word of command is heard. But, after a time, the sound of the word gives rise to the act, whether the soldier be thinking of it or not. There is a story, which is credible enough, though it may not be true, of a practical joker, who, seeing a discharged veteran carrying home his dinner, suddenly called out 'Attention!' whereupon the man instantly brought his hands down, and lost his mutton and potatoes in the gutter. The drill had been gone through, and its effects had become embodied in the man's nervous structure.

"The possibility of all education (of which military drill is only one particular form) is based upon the existence of this power which the nervous system possesses, of organising conscious actions into more or less unconscious, or reflex, operations. It may be laid down as a rule, that if any two mental states be called up together, or in succession, with due frequency and vividness, the subsequent production of the one of them will suffice to call up the other, and that whether we desire it or not."[1]

The body of the accomplished man has thus become by training different from what it once was, and different from that of the rude man; it is charged with stored virtue and acquired faculty which come away from it unconsciously.

Again, as to race, another authority teaches: "Man's life truly represents a progressive development of the nervous system, none the less so because it takes place out of the womb instead of in it. The regular transmutation of motions which are at first voluntary into secondary automatic motions, as Hartley calls them, is due to a gradually effected organisation; and we may rest assured of this, that co-ordinate activity always testifies to stored-up power, either innate or acquired.

"The way in which an acquired faculty of the parent

[1] Huxley's *Elementary Physiology*, pp. 284-286.

animal is sometimes distinctly transmitted to the progeny as a heritage, instinct, or innate endowment, furnishes a striking confirmation of the foregoing observations. Power that has been laboriously acquired and stored up as statical in one generation manifestly in such case becomes the inborn faculty of the next; and the development takes place in accordance with that law of increasing speciality and complexity of adaptation to external nature which is traceable through the animal kingdom; or, in other words, that law of progress from the general to the special in development which the appearance of nerve force amongst natural forces and the complexity of the nervous system of man both illustrate. As the vital force gathers up, as it were, into itself inferior forces, and might be said to be a development of them, or, as in the appearance of nerve force, simpler and more general forces are gathered up and concentrated in a more special and complex mode of energy; so again a further specialisation takes place in the development of the nervous system, whether watched through generations or through individual life. It is not by limiting our observations to the life of the individual, however, who is but a link in the chain of organic beings connecting the past with the future, that we shall come at the full truth; the present individual is the inevitable consequence of his antecedents in the past, and in the examination of these alone do we arrive at the adequate explanation of him. It behoves us, then, having found any faculty to be innate, not to rest content there, but steadily to follow backwards the line of causation, and thus to display, if possible, its manner of origin. This is the more necessary with the lower animals, where so much is innate."[1]

The special laws of inheritance are indeed as yet unknown. All which is clear, and all which is to my purpose is, that there is a tendency, a probability, greater or less according to circumstances, but always considerable, that the descendants of cultivated parents will have, by born nervous organisation, a greater aptitude for cultivation than the descendants of such

[1] Maudsley on the *Physiology and Pathology of the Mind*, p. 73.

as are not cultivated; and that this tendency augments, in some enhanced ratio, for many generations.

I do not think any who do not acquire—and it takes a hard effort to acquire—this notion of a transmitted nerve element will ever understand "the connective tissue" of civilisation. We have here the continuous force which binds age to age, which enables each to begin with some improvement on the last, if the last did itself improve; which makes each civilisation not a set of detached dots, but a line of colour, surely enhancing shade by shade. There is, by this doctrine, a physical cause of improvement from generation to generation: and no imagination which has apprehended it can forget it; but unless you appreciate that cause in its subtle materialism, unless you see it, as it were, playing upon the nerves of men, and, age after age, making nicer music from finer chords, you cannot comprehend the principle of inheritance either in its mystery or its power.

These principles are quite independent of any theory as to the nature of matter, or the nature of mind. They are as true upon the theory that mind acts on matter—though separate and altogether different from it—as upon the theory of Bishop Berkeley that there is no matter, but only mind; or upon the contrary theory—that there is no mind, but only matter; or upon the yet subtler theory now often held—that both mind and matter are different modifications of some one *tertium quid*, some hidden thing or force. All these theories admit—indeed they are but various theories to account for—the fact that what we call matter has consequences in what we call mind, and that what we call mind produces results in what we call matter; and the doctrines I quote assume only that. Our mind in some strange way acts on our nerves, and our nerves in some equally strange way store up the consequences, and somehow the result, as a rule and commonly enough, goes down to our descendants; these primitive facts all theories admit, and all of them labour to explain.

Nor have these plain principles any relation to the old difficulties of necessity and freewill. Every Freewillist holds that the special force of free volition is applied to the pre-exist-

ing forces of our corporeal structure; he does not consider it as an agency acting *in vacuo*, but as an agency acting upon other agencies. Every Freewillist holds that, upon the whole, if you strengthen the motive in a given direction, mankind tend more to act in that direction. Better motives—better impulses, rather—come from a good body: worse motives or worse impulses come from a bad body. A Freewillist may admit as much as a Necessarian that such improved conditions tend to improve human action, and that deteriorated conditions tend to deprave human action. No Freewillist ever expects as much from St. Giles's as he expects from Belgravia: he admits an hereditary nervous system as a *datum* for the will, though he holds the will to be an extraordinary incoming "something". No doubt the modern doctrine of the "Conservation of Force," if applied to decision, is inconsistent with freewill; if you hold that force "is never lost or gained," you cannot hold that there is a real gain—a sort of new creation of it in free volition. But I have nothing to do here with the universal "Conservation of Force". The conception of the nervous organs as stores of will-made power does not raise or need so vast a discussion.

Still less are these principles to be confounded with Mr. Buckle's idea that material forces have been the main-springs of progress, and moral causes secondary, and, in comparison, not to be thought of. On the contrary, moral causes are the first here. It is the action of the will that causes the unconscious habit; it is the continual effort of the beginning that creates the hoarded energy of the end; it is the silent toil of the first generation that becomes the transmitted aptitude of the next. Here physical causes do not create the moral, but moral create the physical; here the beginning is by the higher energy, the conservation and propagation only by the lower. But we thus perceive how a science of history is possible, as Mr. Buckle said,—a science to teach the laws of tendencies—created by the mind, and transmitted by the body—which act upon and incline the will of man from age to age.

II.

But how do these principles change the philosophy of our politics? I think in many ways; and first, in one particularly. Political economy is the most systematised and most accurate part of political philosophy; and yet, by the help of what has been laid down, I think we may travel back to a sort of "pre-economic age," when the very assumptions of political economy did not exist, when its precepts would have been ruinous, and when the very contrary precepts were requisite and wise.

For this purpose I do not need to deal with the dim ages which ethnology just reveals to us—with the stone age, and the flint implements, and the refuse heaps. The time to which I would go back is only that just before the dawn of history—coeval with the dawn, perhaps, it would be right to say—for the first historians saw such a state of society, though they saw other and more advanced states too: a period of which we have distinct descriptions from eye-witnesses, and of which the traces and consequences abound in the oldest law. "The effect," says Sir Henry Maine, the greatest of our living jurists—the only one, perhaps, whose writings are in keeping with our best philosophy—"of the evidence derived from comparative jurisprudence is to establish that view of the primeval condition of the human race which is known as the Patriarchal Theory. There is no doubt, of course, that this theory was originally based on the Scriptural history of the Hebrew patriarchs in Lower Asia; but, as has been explained already, its connection with Scripture rather militated than otherwise against its reception as a complete theory, since the majority of the inquirers who till recently addressed themselves with most earnestness to the colligation of social phenomena, were either influenced by the strongest prejudice against Hebrew antiquities or by the strongest desire to construct their system without the assistance of religious records. Even now there is perhaps a disposition to undervalue these accounts, or rather to decline generalising from them, as forming part of the traditions of a Semitic people. It is to be noted, however, that the legal testimony comes nearly exclusively from the

institutions of societies belonging to the Indo-European stock, the Romans, Hindoos, and Sclavonians supplying the greater part of it; and indeed the difficulty, at the present stage of the inquiry, is to know where to stop, to say of what races of men it is *not* allowable to lay down that the society in which they are united was originally organised on the patriarchal model. The chief lineaments of such a society, as collected from the early chapters in Genesis, I need not attempt to depict with any minuteness, both because they are familiar to most of us from our earliest childhood, and because, from the interest once attaching to the controversy which takes its name from the debate between Locke and Filmer, they fill a whole chapter, though not a very profitable one, in English literature. The points which lie on the surface of the history are these:—The eldest male parent—the eldest ascendant—is absolutely supreme in his household. His dominion extends to life and death, and is as unqualified over his children and their houses as over his slaves; indeed the relations of sonship and serfdom appear to differ in little beyond the higher capacity which the child in blood possesses of becoming one day the head of a family himself. The flocks and herds of the children are the flocks and herds of the father, and the possessions of the parent, which he holds in a representative rather than in a proprietary character, are equally divided at his death among his descendants in the first degree, the eldest son sometimes receiving a double share under the name of birthright, but more generally endowed with no hereditary advantage beyond an honorary precedence. A less obvious inference from the Scriptural accounts is that they seem to plant us on the traces of the breach which is first effected in the empire of the parent. The families of Jacob and Esau separate and form two nations; but the families of Jacob's children hold together and become a people. This looks like the immature germ of a state or commonwealth, and of an order of rights superior to the claims of family relation.

"If I were attempting for the more special purposes of the jurist to express compendiously the characteristics of the situation in which mankind disclose themselves at the dawn of their

history, I should be satisfied to quote a few verses from the 'Odyssey' of Homer:—

> 'τοῖσιν δ' οὔτ' ἀγοραὶ βουληφόροι οὔτε θέμιστες.
> θεμιστεύει δὲ ἕκαστος
> παίδων ἠδ' ἀλόχων, οὐτ' ἀλλήλων ἀλέγουσιν.'"

"'They have neither assemblies for consultation nor *themistes*, but every one exercises jurisdiction over his wives and his children, and they pay no regard to one another.'"

And this description of the beginnings of history is confirmed by what may be called the last lesson of prehistoric ethnology. Perhaps it is the most valuable, as it is clearly the most sure result of that science, that it has dispelled the dreams of other days as to a primitive high civilisation. History catches man as he emerges from the patriarchal state: ethnology shows how he lived, grew, and improved in that state. The conclusive arguments against the imagined original civilisation are indeed plain to every one. Nothing is more intelligible than a moral deterioration of mankind—nothing than an æsthetic degradation—nothing than a political degradation. But you cannot imagine mankind giving up the plain utensils of personal comfort, if they once knew them; still less can you imagine them giving up good weapons—say bows and arrows—if they once knew them. Yet if there were a primitive civilisation these things *must* have been forgotten, for tribes can be found in every degree of ignorance, and every grade of knowledge as to pottery, as to the metals, as to the means of comfort, as to the instruments of war. And what is more, these savages have not failed from stupidity; they are, in various degrees of originality, inventive about these matters. You cannot trace the roots of an old perfect system variously maimed and variously dying; you cannot find it, as you find the trace of the Latin language in the mediæval dialects. On the contrary, you find it beginning—as new scientific discoveries and inventions now begin—here a little and there a little, the same thing half-done in various half-ways, and so as no one who knew the best way would ever have begun. An idea used to prevail that bows and arrows were the "primitive weapons"—the weapons of universal savages; but modern

science has made a table,[1] and some savages have them and some have not, and some have substitutes of one sort and some have substitutes of another—several of these substitutes being like the 'boomerang,' so much more difficult to hit on or to use than the bow, as well as so much less effectual. And not only may the miscellaneous races of the world be justly described as being upon various edges of industrial civilisation, approaching it by various sides, and falling short of it in various particulars, but the moment they see the real thing they know how to use it as well, or better, than civilised man. The South American uses the horse which the European brought better than the European. Many races use the rifle—the especial and very complicated weapon of civilised man—better, upon an average, than he can use it. The savage with simple tools—tools he appreciates—is like a child, quick to learn, not like an old man, who has once forgotten and who cannot acquire again. Again, if there had been an excellent aboriginal civilisation in Australia and America, where, botanists and zoologists, ask, are its vestiges? If these savages did care to cultivate wheat, where is the wild wheat gone which their abandoned culture must have left? if they did give up using good domestic animals, what has become of the wild ones which would, according to all natural laws, have sprung up out of them? This much is certain, that the domestic animals of Europe have, since what may be called the discovery of the *world* during the last hundred years, run up and down it. The English rat—not the pleasantest of our domestic creatures—has gone everywhere; to Australia, to New Zealand, to America: nothing but a complicated rat-miracle could ever root him out. Nor could a common force expel the horse from South America since the Spaniards took him thither; if we did not know the contrary we should suppose him a principal aboriginal animal. Where then, so to say, are the rats and horses of the primitive civilisation? Not only can we not find them, but zoological science tells us that they never existed, for the "feebly pronounced," the ineffectual, marsupials

[1] See the very careful table and admirable discussion in Sir John Lubbock's *Pre-Historic Times*.

of Australia and New Zealand could never have survived a competition with better creatures, such as that by which they are now perishing.

We catch then a first glimpse of patriarchal man, not with any industrial relics of a primitive civilisation, but with some gradually learnt knowledge of the simpler arts, with some tamed animals and some little knowledge of the course of nature as far as it tells upon the seasons and affects the condition of simple tribes. This is what, according to ethnology, we should expect the first historic man to be, and this is what we in fact find him. But what was his mind; how are we to describe that?

I believe the general description in which Sir John Lubbock sums up his estimate of the savage mind suits the patriarchal mind. "Savages," he says, "unite the character of childhood with the passions and strength of men." And if we open the first record of the pagan world—the poems of Homer—how much do we find that suits this description better than any other. Civilisation has indeed already gone forward ages beyond the time at which any such description is complete. Man, in Homer, is as good at oratory, Mr. Gladstone seems to say, as he has ever been, and, much as that means, other and better things might be added to it. But after all, how much of the "splendid savage" there is in Achilles, and how much of the "spoiled child sulking in his tent". Impressibility and excitability are the main characteristics of the oldest Greek history, and if we turn to the east, the "simple and violent" world, as Mr. Kinglake calls it, of the first times meets us every moment.

And this is precisely what we should expect. An "inherited drill," science says, "makes modern nations what they are; their born structure bears the trace of the laws of their fathers"; but the ancient nations came into no such inheritance; they were the descendants of people who did what was right in their own eyes; they were born to no tutored habits, no preservative bonds, and therefore they were at the mercy of every impulse and blown by every passion.

The condition of the primitive man, if we conceive of him

rightly, is, in several respects, different from any we know. We unconsciously assume around us the existence of a great miscellaneous social machine working to our hands, and not only supplying our wants, but even telling and deciding when those wants shall come. No one can now without difficulty conceive how people got on before there were clocks and watches; as Sir G. Lewis said, "it takes a vigorous effort of the imagination" to realise a period when it was a serious difficulty to know the hour of day. And much more is it difficult to fancy the unstable minds of such men as neither knew nature, which is the clock-work of material civilisation, nor possessed a polity, which is a kind of clockwork to moral civilisation. They never could have known what to expect; the whole habit of steady but varied anticipation, which makes our minds what they are, must have been wholly foreign to theirs.

Again, I at least cannot call up to myself the loose conceptions (as they must have been) of morals which then existed. If we set aside all the element derived from law and polity which runs through our current moral notions, I hardly know what we shall have left. The residuum was somehow, and in some vague way, intelligible to the ante-political man, but it must have been uncertain, wavering, and unfit to be depended upon. In the best cases it existed much as the vague feeling of beauty now exists in minds sensitive but untaught; a still small voice of uncertain meaning; an unknown something modifying everything else, and higher than anything else, yet in form so indistinct that when you looked for it, it was gone —or if this be thought the delicate fiction of a later fancy, then morality was at least to be found in the wild spasms of "wild justice," half punishment, half outrage,—but anyhow, being unfixed by steady law, it was intermittent, vague, and hard for us to imagine. Everybody who has studied mathematics knows how many shadowy difficulties he seemed to have before he understood the problem, and how impossible it was when once the demonstration had flashed upon him, ever to comprehend those indistinct difficulties again, or to call up the mental confusion that admitted them. So in these days,

when we cannot by any effort drive out of our minds the notion of law, we cannot imagine the mind of one who had never known it, and who could not by any effort have conceived it.

Again, the primitive man could not have imagined what we mean by a nation. We on the other hand cannot imagine those to whom it is a difficulty; "we know what it is when you do not ask us," but we cannot very quickly explain or define it. But so much as this is plain, a nation means a *like* body of men, because of that likeness capable of acting together, and because of that likeness inclined to obey similar rules; and even this Homer's Cyclops—used only to sparse human beings—could not have conceived.

To sum up—*law*—rigid, definite, concise law—is the primary want of early mankind; that which they need above anything else, that which is requisite before they can gain anything else. But it is their greatest difficulty, as well as their first requisite; the thing most out of their reach, as well as that most beneficial to them if they reach it. In later ages many races have gained much of this discipline quickly, though painfully; a loose set of scattered clans has been often and often forced to substantial settlement by a rigid conqueror; the Romans did half the work for above half Europe. But where could the first ages find Romans or a conqueror? Men conquer by the power of government, and it was exactly government which then was not. The first ascent of civilisation was at a steep gradient, though when now we look down upon it, it seems almost nothing.

III.

How the step from no polity to polity was made distinct, history does not record,—on this point Sir Henry Maine has drawn a most interesting conclusion from his peculiar studies:—

"It would be," he tells us, "a very simple explanation of the origin of society if we could base a general conclusion on the hint furnished us by the Scriptural example already adverted to, and could suppose that communities began to exist where-

ever a family held together instead of separating at the death of its patriarchal chieftain. In most of the Greek states and in Rome there long remained the vestiges of an ascending series of groups out of which the state was at first constituted. The family, house, and tribe of the Romans may be taken as a type of them, and they are so described to us that we can scarcely help conceiving them as a system of concentric circles which have gradually expanded from the same point. The elementary group is the family, connected by common subjection to the highest male ascendant. The aggregation of families forms the *gens*, or house. The aggregation of houses makes the tribe. The aggregation of tribes constitutes the commonwealth. Are we at liberty to follow these indications, and to lay down that the commonwealth is a collection of persons united by common descent from the progenitor of an original family? Of this we may at least be certain, that all ancient societies regarded themselves as having proceeded from one original stock, and even laboured under an incapacity for comprehending any reason except this for their holding together in political union. The history of political ideas begins, in fact, with the assumption that kinship in blood is the sole possible ground of community in political functions; nor is there any of those subversions of feeling, which we term emphatically revolutions, so startling and so complete as the change which is accomplished when some other principle—such as that, for instance, of *local contiguity*—establishes itself for the first time as the basis of common political action."

If this theory were true, the origin of politics would not seem a great change, or, in early days, be really a great change. The primacy of the elder brother, in tribes casually cohesive, would be slight; it would be the beginning of much, but it would be nothing in itself; it would be—to take an illustration from the opposite end of the political series—it would be like the headship of a weak Parliamentary leader over adherents who may divide from him in a moment; it was the germ of sovereignty—it was hardly yet sovereignty itself.

I do not myself believe that the suggestion of Sir Henry Maine—for he does not, it will be seen, offer it as a confident

theory—is an adequate account of the true origin of politics. I shall in a subsequent essay show that there are, as it seems to me, abundant evidences of a time still older than that which he speaks of. But the theory of Sir Henry Maine serves my present purpose well. It describes, and truly describes, a kind of life antecedent to our present politics, and the conclusion I have drawn from it will be strengthened, not weakened, when we come to examine and deal with an age yet older, and a social bond far more rudimentary.

But when once polities were begun, there is no difficulty in explaining why they lasted. Whatever may be said against the principle of "natural selection" in other departments, there is no doubt of its predominance in early human history. The strongest killed out the weakest, as they could. And I need not pause to prove that any form of polity is more efficient than none; that an aggregate of families owning even a slippery allegiance to a single head, would be sure to have the better of a set of families acknowledging no obedience to anyone, but scattering loose about the world and fighting where they stood. Homer's Cyclops would be powerless against the feeblest band; so far from its being singular that we find no other record of that state of man, so unstable and sure to perish was it that we should rather wonder at even a single vestige lasting down to the age when for picturesqueness it became valuable in poetry.

But, though the origin of polity is dubious, we are upon the *terra firma* of actual records when we speak of the preservation of politics. Perhaps every young Englishman who comes nowadays to Aristotle or Plato is struck with their conservatism: fresh from the liberal doctrines of the present age, he wonders at finding in those recognised teachers so much contrary teaching. They both—unlike as they are—hold with Xenophon—so unlike both—that man is the "hardest of all animals to govern". Of Plato it might indeed be plausibly said that the adherents of an intuitive philosophy, being "the Tories of speculation," have commonly been prone to conservatism in government; but Aristotle, the founder of the experience philosophy, ought, according to that doctrine, to have

been a Liberal, if anyone ever was a Liberal. In fact, both of these men lived when men had not "had time to forget" the difficulties of government. We have forgotten them altogether. We reckon, as the basis of our culture, upon an amount of order, of tacit obedience, of prescriptive governability, which these philosophers hoped to get as a principal result of their culture. We take without thought as a *datum*, what they hunted as a *quæsitum*.

In early times the quantity of government is much more important than its quality. What you want is a comprehensive rule binding men together, making them do much the same things, telling them what to expect of each other—fashioning them alike, and keeping them so. What this rule is does not matter so much. A good rule is better than a bad one, but any rule is better than none; while, for reasons which a jurist will appreciate, none can be very good. But to gain that rule, what may be called the impressive elements of a polity are incomparably more important than its useful elements. How to get the obedience of men is the hard problem; what you do with that obedience is less critical.

To gain that obedience, the primary condition is the identity—not the union, but the sameness—of what we now call Church and State. Dr. Arnold, fresh from the study of Greek thought and Roman history, used to preach that this identity was the great cure for the misguided modern world. But he spoke to ears filled with other sounds and minds filled with other thoughts, and they hardly knew his meaning, much less heeded it. But though the teaching was wrong for the modern age to which it was applied, it was excellent for the old world from which it was learnt. What is there requisite is a single government—call it Church or State, as you like—regulating the whole of human life. No division of power is then endurable without danger—probably without destruction; the priest must not teach one thing and the king another; king must be priest, and prophet king: the two must say the same, because they are the same. The idea of difference between spiritual penalties and legal penalties must never be awakened. Indeed, early Greek thought or early Roman thought would

never have comprehended it. There was a kind of rough public opinion and there were rough, very rough, hands which acted on it. We now talk of political penalties and ecclesiastical prohibition, and the social censure, but they were all one then. Nothing is very like those old communities now, but perhaps a "trade's union" is as near as most things; to work cheap is thought to be a "wicked" thing, and so some Broadhead puts it down.

The object of such organisations is to create what may be called a *cake* of custom. All the actions of life are to be submitted to a single rule for a single object; that gradually created the "hereditary drill" which science teaches to be essential, and which the early instinct of men saw to be essential too. That this *régime* forbids free thought is not an evil; or rather, though an evil, it is the necessray basis for the greatest good; it is necessary for making the mould of civilisation, and hardening the soft fibre of early man.

The first recorded history of the Aryan race shows everywhere a king, a council, and, as the necessity of early conflicts required, the king in much prominence and with much power. That there could be in such ages anything like an oriental despotism, or a Cæsarean despotism, was impossible; the outside extra-political army which maintains them could not exist when the tribe was the nation, and when all the men in the tribe were warriors. Hence, in the time of Homer, in the first times of Rome, in the first times of ancient Germany, the king is the most visible part of the polity, because for momentary welfare he is the most useful. The close oligarchy, the patriciate, which alone could know the fixed law, alone could apply the fixed law, which was recognised as the authorised custodian of the fixed law, had then sole command over the primary social want. It alone knew the code of drill; it alone was obeyed; it alone could drill. Mr. Grote has admirably described the rise of the primitive oligarchies upon the face of the first monarchy, but perhaps because he so much loves historic Athens, he has not sympathised with prehistoric Athens. He has not shown us the need of a fixed life when all else was unfixed life.

It would be schoolboyish to explain at length how well the two great republics, the two winning republics of the ancient world, embody these conclusions. Rome and Sparta were drilling aristocracies, and succeeded because they were such. Athens was indeed of another and higher order; at least to us instructed moderns who know her and have been taught by her. But to the "Philistines" of those days Athens was of a lower order. She was beaten; she lost the great visible game which is all that short-sighted contemporaries know. She was the great "free failure" of the ancient world. She began, she announced, the good things that were to come; but she was too weak to display and enjoy them; she was trodden down by those of coarser make and better trained frame.

How much these principles are confirmed by Jewish history is obvious. There was doubtless much else in Jewish history —whole elements with which I am not here concerned. But so much is plain. The Jews were in the beginning the most unstable of nations; they were submitted to their law, and they came out the most stable of nations. Their polity was indeed defective in unity. After they asked for a king the spiritual and the secular powers (as we should speak) were never at peace, and never agreed. And the ten tribes who lapsed from their law, melted away into the neighbouring nations. Jeroboam has been called the "first Liberal"; and, religion apart, there is a meaning in the phrase. He began to break up the binding polity which was what men wanted in that age, though eager and inventive minds always dislike it. But the Jews who adhered to their law became the Jews of the day, a nation of a firm set if ever there was one.

It is connected with this fixity that jurists tell us that the title "contract" is hardly to be discovered in the oldest law. In modern days, in civilised days, men's choice determines nearly all they do. But in early times that choice determined scarcely anything. The guiding rule was the law of *status*. Everybody was born to a place in the community: in that place he had to stay: in that place he found certain duties which he had to fulfil, and which were all he needed to think

of. The net of custom caught men in distinct spots, and kept each where he stood.

What are called in European politics the principles of 1789, are therefore inconsistent with the early world; they are fitted only to the new world in which society has gone through its early task; when the inherited organisation is already confirmed and fixed; when the soft minds and strong passions of youthful nations are fixed and guided by hard transmitted instincts. Till then not equality before the law is necessary but inequality, for what is most wanted is an elevated *élite* who know the law: not a good Government seeking the happiness of its subjects, but a dignified and overawing Government getting its subjects to obey: not a good law, but a comprehensive law binding all life to one routine. Later are the ages of freedom; first are the ages of servitude. In 1789, when the great men of the Constituent Assembly looked on the long past, they hardly saw anything in it which could be praised, or admired, or imitated: all seemed a blunder—a complex error to be got rid of as soon as might be. But that error had made themselves. On their very physical organisation the hereditary mark of old times was fixed; their brains were hardened and their nerves were steadied by the transmitted results of tedious usages. The ages of monotony had their use, for they trained men for ages when they need not be monotonous.

IV.

But even yet we have not realised the full benefit of those early polities and those early laws. They not only "bound up" men in groups, not only impressed on men a certain set of common usages, but often, at least in an indirect way, suggested, if I may use the expression, national character.

We cannot yet explain—I am sure, at least, I cannot attempt to explain—all the singular phenomena of national character: how completely and perfectly they seem to be at first framed; how slowly, how gradually they can alone be altered, if they can be altered at all. But there is one analogous fact which may help us to see, at least dimly, how such phenomena are caused. There is a character of *ages*, as well

as of nations; and as we have full histories of many such periods, we can examine exactly when and how the mental peculiarity of each began, and also exactly when and how that mental peculiarity passed away. We have an idea of Queen Anne's time, for example, or of Queen Elizabeth's time, or George II.'s time; or again of the age of Louis XIV., or Louis XV., or the French Revolution; an idea more or less accurate in proportion as we study, but probably even in the minds who know these ages best and most minutely, more special, more simple, more unique than the truth was. We throw aside too much, in making up our images of eras, that which is common to all eras. The English character was much the same in many great respects in Chaucer's time, as it was in Elizabeth's time or Anne's time, or as it is now. But some qualities were added to this common element in one era and some in another; some qualities seemed to overshadow and eclipse it in one era, and others in another. We overlook and half forget the constant while we see and watch the variable. But—for that is the present point—*why* is there this variable? Every one must, I think, have been puzzled about it. Suddenly, in a quiet time—say, in Queen Anne's time—arises a special literature, a marked variety of human expression, pervading what is then written and peculiar to it: surely this is singular.

The true explanation is, I think, something like this. One considerable writer gets a sort of start because what he writes is somewhat more—only a little more very often, as I believe—congenial to the minds around him than any other sort. This writer is very often not the one whom posterity remembers—not the one who carries the style of the age farthest towards its ideal type, and gives it its charm and its perfection. It was not Addison who began the essay-writing of Queen Anne's time, but Steele; it was the vigorous forward man who struck out the rough notion, though it was the wise and meditative man who improved upon it and elaborated it, and whom posterity reads. Some strong writer, or group of writers, thus seize on the public mind, and a curious process soon assimilates other writers in appearance to them. To some extent, no doubt, this assimilation is effected by a process most intelligible, and not

at all curious—the process of conscious imitation; A sees that B's style of writing answers, and he imitates it. But definitely aimed mimicry like this is always rare; original men who like their own thoughts do not willingly clothe them in words they feel they borrow. No man, indeed, can think to much purpose when he is studying to write a style not his own. After all, very few men are at all equal to the steady labour, the stupid and mistaken labour mostly, of *making* a style. Most men catch the words that are in the air, and the rhythm which comes to them they do not know from whence; an unconscious imitation determines their words, and makes them say what of themselves they would never have thought of saying. Every one who has written in more than one newspaper knows how invariably his style catches the tone of each paper while he is writing for it, and changes to the tone of another when in turn he begins to write for that. He probably would rather write the traditional style to which the readers of the journal are used, but he does not set himself to copy it; he would have to force himself in order *not* to write it if that was what he wanted. Exactly in this way, just as a writer for a journal without a distinctly framed purpose gives the readers of the journal the sort of words and the sort of thoughts they are used to—so, on a larger scale, the writers of an age, without thinking of it, give to the readers of the age the sort of words and the sort of thoughts—the special literature, in fact—which those readers like and prize. And not only does the writer, without thinking, choose the sort of style and meaning which are most in vogue, but the writer is himself chosen. A writer does not begin to write in the traditional rhythm of an age unless he feels, or fancies he feels, a sort of aptitude for writing it, any more than a writer tries to write in a journal in which the style is uncongenial or impossible to him. Indeed, if he mistakes he is soon weeded out; the editor rejects, the age will not read his compositions. How painfully this traditional style cramps great writers whom it happens not to suit, is curiously seen in Wordsworth, who was bold enough to break through it, and, at the risk of contemporary neglect, to frame a style of his own. But he did so knowingly, and he did so

with an effort. "It is supposed," he says, "that by the act of writing in verse an author makes a formal engagement that he will gratify certain known habits of association; that he not only then apprizes the reader that certain classes of ideas and expressions will be found in his book, but that others will be carefully eschewed. The exponent or symbol held forth by metrical language must, in different ages of literature, have excited very different expectations; for example, in the age of Catullus, Terence, or Lucretius, and that of Statius or Claudian; and in our own country, in the age of Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher, and that of Donne and Cowley, or Pope." And then, in a kind of vexed way, Wordsworth goes on to explain that he himself can't and won't do what is expected from him, but that he will write his own words, and only his own words. A strict, I was going to say a Puritan, genius will act thus, but most men of genius are susceptible and versatile, and fall into the style of their age. One very unapt at the assimilating process, but on that account the more curious about it, says:—

> How we
> Track a livelong day, great heaven, and watch our shadows!
> What our shadows seem, forsooth, we will ourselves be.
> Do I look like that? You think me that: then I *am* that.

What writers are expected to write, they write; or else they do not write at all; but, like the writer of these lines, stop discouraged, live disheartened, and die leaving fragments which their friends treasure, but which a rushing world never heeds. The Nonconformist writers are neglected, the Conformist writers are encouraged, until perhaps on a sudden the fashion shifts. And as with the writers, so in a less degree with readers. Many men—most men—get to like or think they like that which is ever before them, and which those around them like, and which received opinion says they ought to like; or if their minds are too marked and oddly made to get into the mould, they give up reading altogether, or read old books and foreign books, formed under another code and appealing to a different taste. The principle of "elimination," the "use and disuse" of organs which naturalists speak of, works here. What is used

strengthens; what is disused weakens: "to those who have, more is given"; and so a sort of style settles upon an age, and imprinting itself more than anything else in men's memories becomes all that is thought of about it.

I believe that what we call national character arose in very much the same way. At first a sort of "chance predominance" made a model, and then invincible attraction, the necessity which rules all but the strongest men to imitate what is before their eyes, and to be what they are expected to be, moulded men by that model. This is, I think, the very process by which new national characters are being made in our own time. In America and in Australia a new modification of what we call Anglo-Saxonism is growing. A sort of type of character arose from the difficulties of colonial life—the difficulty of struggling with the wilderness; and this type has given its shape to the mass of characters because the mass of characters have unconsciously imitated it. Many of the American characteristics are plainly useful in such a life, and consequent on such a life. The eager restlessness, the highly-strung nervous organisation are useful in continual struggle, and also are promoted by it. These traits seem to be arising in Australia, too, and wherever else the English race is placed in like circumstances. But even in these useful particulars the innate tendency of the human mind to become like what is around it, has effected much; a sluggish Englishman will often catch the eager American look in a few years; an Irishman or even a German will catch it, too, even in all English particulars. And as to a hundred minor points—in so many that go to mark the typical Yankee—usefulness has had no share either in their origin or their propagation. The accident of some predominant person possessing them set the fashion, and it has been imitated to this day. Anybody who inquires will find even in England, and even in these days of assimilation, parish peculiarities which arose, no doubt, from some old accident, and have been heedfully preserved by customary copying. A national character is but the successful parish character; just as the national speech is but the successful parish dialect, the dialect, that is, of the district which came to be more—in many cases

but a little more—influential than other districts, and so set its yoke on books and on society.

I could enlarge much on this, for I believe this unconscious imitation to be the principal force in the making of national characters; but I have already said more about it than I need. Everybody who weighs even half these arguments will admit that it is a great force in the matter, a principal agency to be acknowledged and watched: and for my present purpose I want no more. I have only to show the efficacy of the tight early polity (so to speak) and the strict early law on the creation of corporate characters. These settled the predominant type, set up a sort of model, made a sort of *idol;* this was worshipped, copied, and observed, from all manner of mingled feelings, but most of all because it was the "thing to do," the then accepted form of human action. When once the predominant type was determined, the copying propensity of man did the rest. The tradition ascribing Spartan legislation to Lycurgus was literally untrue, but its spirit was quite true. In the origin of states strong and eager individuals got hold of small knots of men, and made for them a fashion which they were attached to and kept.

It is only after duly apprehending the silent manner in which national characters thus form themselves, that we can rightly appreciate the dislike which old Governments had to trade. There must have been something peculiar about it, for the best philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, shared it. They regarded commerce as the source of corruption as naturally as a modern economist considers it the spring of industry, and all the old Governments acted in this respect upon the philosophers' maxims. "Well," said Dr. Arnold, speaking ironically and in the spirit of modern times—"Well, indeed, might the policy of the old priest-nobles of Egypt and India endeavour to divert their people from becoming familiar with the sea, and represent the occupation of a seaman as incompatible with the purity of the highest castes. The sea deserved to be hated by the old aristocracies, inasmuch as it has been the mightiest instrument in the civilisation of mankind." But the old oligarchies had their own work, as we now know. They were

imposing a fashioning yoke; they were making the human nature which after times employ. They were at their labours, we have entered into these labours. And to the unconscious imitation which was their principal tool, no impediment was so formidable as foreign intercourse. Men imitate what is before their eyes, if it is before their eyes alone, but they do not imitate it if it is only one among many present things—one competitor among others, all of which are equal and some of which seem better. "Whoever speaks two languages is a rascal," says the saying, and it rightly represents the feeling of primitive communities when the sudden impact of new thoughts and new examples breaks down the compact despotism of the single consecrated code, and leaves pliant and impressible man—such as he then is—to follow his unpleasant will without distinct guidance by hereditary morality and hereditary religion. The old oligarchies wanted to keep their type perfect, and for that end they were right not to allow foreigners to touch it.

"Distinctions of race," says Arnold himself elsewhere in a remarkable essay—for it was his last on Greek history, his farewell words on a long favourite subject—"were not of that odious and fantastic character which they have been in modern times; they implied real differences of the most important kind, religious and moral." And after exemplifying this at length he goes on, "It is not then to be wondered at that Thucydides, when speaking of a city founded jointly by Ionians and Dorians, should have thought it right to add 'that the prevailing institutions of the two were Ionian,' for according as they were derived from one or the other the prevailing type would be different. And therefore the mixture of persons of different race in the same commonwealth, unless one race had a complete ascendancy, tended to confuse all the relations of human life, and all men's notions of right and wrong; or by compelling men to tolerate in so near a relation as that of fellow-citizens differences upon the main points of human life, led to a general carelessness and scepticism, and encouraged the notion that right and wrong had no real existence, but were mere creatures of human opinion." But

if this be so, the oligarchies were right. Commerce brings this mingling of ideas, this breaking down of old creeds, and brings it inevitably. It is nowadays its greatest good that it does so; the change is what we call "enlargement of mind". But in early times Providence "set apart the nations"; and it is not till the frame of their morals is set by long ages of transmitted discipline, that such enlargement can be borne. The ages of isolation had their use, for they trained men for ages when they were not to be isolated.

No. II.

THE USE OF CONFLICT.

I.

"The difference between progression and stationary inaction," says one of our greatest living writers, "is one of the great secrets which science has yet to penetrate." I am sure I do not pretend that I can completely penetrate it; but it undoubtedly seems to me that the problem is on the verge of solution, and that scientific successes in kindred fields by analogy suggest some principles which wholly remove many of its difficulties, and indicate the sort of way in which those which remain may hereafter be removed too.

But what is the problem? Common English, I might perhaps say common civilised thought, ignores it. Our habitual instructors, our ordinary conversation, our inevitable and ineradicable prejudices tend to make us think that "Progress" is the normal fact in human society, the fact which we should expect to see, the fact which we should be surprised if we did not see. But history refutes this. The ancients had no conception of progress; they did not so much as reject the idea; they did not even entertain the idea. Oriental nations are just the same now. Since history began they have always been what they are. Savages, again, do not improve; they hardly seem to have the basis on which to build, much less the material to put up anything worth having. Only a few nations, and those of European origin, advance;

and yet these think—seem irresistibly compelled to think—such advance to be inevitable, natural, and eternal. Why then is this great contrast?

Before we can answer, we must investigate more accurately. No doubt history shows that most nations are stationary now; but it affords reason to think that all nations once advanced. Their progress was arrested at various points; but nowhere, probably not even in the hill tribes of India, not even in the Andaman Islanders, not even in the savages of Terra del Fuego, do we find men who have not got some way. They have made their little progress in a hundred different ways; they have framed with infinite assiduity a hundred curious habits; they have, so to say, *screwed* themselves into the uncomfortable corners of a complex life, which is odd and dreary, but yet is possible. And the corners are never the same in any two parts of the world. Our record begins with a thousand unchanging edifices, but it shows traces of previous building. In historic times there has been little progress; in prehistoric times there must have been much.

In solving, or trying to solve, the question, we must take notice of this remarkable difference, and explain it, too, or else we may be sure our principles are utterly incomplete, and perhaps altogether unsound. But what then is that solution, or what are the principles which tend towards it? Three laws, or approximate laws, may, I think, be laid down, with only one of which I can deal in this paper, but all three of which it will be best to state, that it may be seen what I am aiming at.

First. In every particular state of the world, those nations which are strongest tend to prevail over the others; and in certain marked peculiarities the strongest tend to be the best.

Secondly. Within every particular nation the type or types of character then and there most attractive tend to prevail; and the most attractive, though with exceptions, is what we call the best character.

Thirdly. Neither of these competitions is in most historic conditions intensified by extrinsic forces, but in some conditions, such as those now prevailing in the most influential part of the world, both are so intensified.

These are the sort of doctrines with which, under the name of "natural selection" in physical science, we have become familiar; and as every great scientific conception tends to advance its boundaries and to be of use in solving problems not thought of when it was started, so here, what was put forward for mere animal history may, with a change of form, but an identical essence, be applied to human history.

At first some objection was raised to the principle of "natural selection" in physical science upon religious grounds; it was to be expected that so active an idea and so large a shifting of thought would seem to imperil much which men valued. But in this, as in other cases, the objection is, I think, passing away; the new principle is more and more seen to be fatal to mere outworks of religion, not to religion itself. At all events, to the sort of application here made of it, which only amounts to searching out and following up an analogy suggested by it, there is plainly no objection. Every one now admits that human history is guided by certain laws, and all that is here aimed at is to indicate, in a more or less distinct way, an infinitesimally small portion of such laws.

The discussion of these three principles cannot be kept quite apart except by pedantry; but it is almost exclusively with the first—that of the competition between nation and nation, or tribe and tribe (for I must use these words in their largest sense, and so as to include every cohering aggregate of human beings)—that I can deal now; and even as to that I can but set down a few principal considerations.

The progress of the military art is the most conspicuous, I was about to say the most *showy*, fact in human history. Ancient civilisation may be compared with modern in many respects, and plausible arguments constructed to show that it is better; but you cannot compare the two in military power. Napoleon could indisputably have conquered Alexander; our Indian army would not think much of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand. And I suppose the improvement has been continuous: I have not the slightest pretence to special knowledge; but, looking at the mere surface of the facts, it seems likely that the aggregate battle array, so to say, of mankind, the

fighting force of the human race, has constantly and invariably grown. It is true that the ancient civilisation long resisted the "barbarians," and was then destroyed by the barbarians. But the barbarians had improved. "By degrees," says a most accomplished writer,[1] "barbarian mercenaries came to form the largest, or at least the most effective, part of the Roman armies. The bodyguard of Augustus had been so composed; the prætorians were generally selected from the bravest frontier troops, most of them Germans." "Thus," he continues, "in many ways was the old antagonism broken down, Romans admitting barbarians to rank and office; barbarians catching something of the manners and culture of their neighbours. And thus, when the final movement came, the Teutonic tribes slowly established themselves through the provinces, knowing something of the system to which they came, and not unwilling to be considered its members." Taking friend and foe together, it may be doubted whether the fighting capacity of the two armies was not as great at last, when the Empire fell, as ever it was in the long period while the Empire prevailed. During the Middle Ages the combining power of men often failed; in a divided time you cannot collect as many soldiers as in a concentrated time. But this difficulty is political, not military. If you added up the many little hosts of any century of separation, they would perhaps be found equal or greater than the single host, or the fewer hosts, of previous centuries which were more united. Taken as a whole, and allowing for possible exceptions, the aggregate fighting power of mankind has grown immensely, and has been growing continuously since we knew anything about it.

Again, this force has tended to concentrate itself more and more in certain groups which we call "civilised nations". The *literati* of the last century were for ever in fear of a new conquest of the barbarians, but only because their imagination was overshadowed and frightened by the old conquests. A very little consideration would have shown them that, since the monopoly of military inventions by cultivated states, real and effective military power tends to confine itself to those states.

[1] Mr. Bryce.

The barbarians are no longer so much as vanquished competitors; they have ceased to compete at all.

The military vices, too, of civilisation seem to decline just as its military strength augments. Somehow or other civilisation does not make men effeminate or unwarlike now as it once did. There is an improvement in our fibre—moral, if not physical. In ancient times city people could not be got to fight—seemingly could not fight; they lost their mental courage, perhaps their bodily nerve. But nowadays in all countries the great cities could pour out multitudes wanting nothing but practice to make good soldiers, and abounding in bravery and vigour. This was so in America; it was so in Prussia; and it would be so in England too. The breed of ancient times was impaired for war by trade and luxury, but the modern breed is not so impaired.

A curious fact indicates the same thing probably, if not certainly. Savages waste away before modern civilisation; they seem to have held their ground before the ancient. There is no lament in any classical writer for the barbarians. The New Zealanders say that the land will depart from their children; the Australians are vanishing; the Tasmanians have vanished. If anything like this had happened in antiquity, the classical moralists would have been sure to muse over it; for it is just the large solemn kind of fact that suited them. On the contrary, in Gaul, in Spain, in Sicily—everywhere that we know of—the barbarian endured the contact of the Roman, and the Roman allied himself to the barbarian. Modern science explains the wasting away of savage men; it says that we have diseases which we can bear, though they cannot, and that they die away before them as our fatted and protected cattle died out before the rinderpest, which is innocuous, in comparison, to the hardy cattle of the Steppes. Savages in the first year of the Christian era were pretty much what they were in the 1800th; and if they stood the contact of ancient civilised men, and cannot stand ours, it follows that our race is presumably tougher than the ancient; for we have to bear, and do bear, the seeds of greater diseases than those the ancients carried with them. We may use, perhaps, the unvarying savage as a

metre to gauge the vigour of the constitutions to whose contact he is exposed.

Particular consequences may be dubious, but as to the main fact there is no doubt: the military strength of man has been growing from the earliest time known to our history, straight on till now. And we must not look at times known by written records only; we must travel back to older ages, known to us only by what lawyers call *real* evidence—the evidence of things. Before history began, there was at least as much progress in the military art as there has been since. The Roman legionaries or Homeric Greeks were about as superior to the men of the shell mounds and the flint implements as we are superior to them. There has been a constant acquisition of military strength by man since we know anything of him, either by the documents he has composed or the indications he has left.

The cause of this military growth is very plain. The strongest nation has always been conquering the weaker; sometimes even subduing it, but always prevailing over it. Every intellectual gain, so to speak, that a nation possessed was in the earliest times made use of—was *invested* and taken out—in war; all else perished. Each nation tried constantly to be the stronger, and so made or copied the best weapons; by conscious and unconscious imitation each nation formed a type of character suitable to war and conquest. Conquest improved mankind by the intermixture of strengths; the armed truce, which was then called peace, improved them by the competition of training and the consequent creation of new power. Since the long-headed men first drove the short-headed men out of the best land in Europe, all European history has been the history of the superposition of the more military races over the less military—of the efforts, sometimes successful, sometimes unsuccessful, of each race to get more military; and so the art of war has constantly improved.

But why is one nation stronger than another? In the answer to that, I believe, lies the key to the principal progress of early civilisation, and to some of the progress of all civilisation. The answer is that there are very many advantages—some small

and some great—every one of which tends to make the nation which has it superior to the nation which has it not; that many of these advantages can be imparted to subjugated races, or imitated by competing races; and that, though some of these advantages may be perishable or inimitable, yet, on the whole, the energy of civilisation grows by the coalescence of strengths and by the competition of strengths.

II.

By far the greatest advantage is that on which I observed before—that to which I drew all the attention I was able by making the first of these essays an essay on the Preliminary Age. The first thing to acquire is, if I may so express it, the *legal fibre;* a polity first—what sort of polity is immaterial; a law first—what kind of law is secondary; a person or set of persons to pay deference to—though who he is, or they are, by comparison scarcely signifies.

"There is," it has been said, "hardly any exaggerating the difference between civilised and uncivilised men; it is greater than the difference between a tame and a wild animal," because man can improve more. But the difference at first was gained in much the same way. The taming of animals as it now goes on among savage nations, and as travellers who have seen it describe it, is a kind of selection. The most wild are killed when food is wanted, and the most tame and easy to manage kept, because they are more agreeable to human indolence, and so the keeper likes them best. Captain Galton, who has often seen strange scenes of savage and of animal life, had better describe the process:—"The irreclaimably wild members of every flock would escape and be utterly lost; the wilder of those that remained would assuredly be selected for slaughter whenever it was necessary that one of the flock should be killed. The tamest cattle—those which seldom ran away, that kept the flocks together, and those which led them homeward—would be preserved alive longer than any of the others. It is, therefore, these that chiefly become the parents of stock and bequeath their domestic aptitudes to the future herd. I have constantly witnessed this process of selection among the pastoral

savages of South Africa. I believe it to be a very important one on account of its rigour and its regularity. It must have existed from the earliest times, and have been in continuous operation, generation after generation, down to the present day."[1]

Man, being the strongest of all animals, differs from the rest; he was obliged to be his own domesticator; he had to tame himself. And the way in which it happened was, that the most obedient, the tamest tribes are, at the first stage in the real struggle of life, the strongest and the conquerors. All are very wild then; the animal vigour, the savage virtue of the race has died out in none, and all have enough of it. But what makes one tribe—one incipient tribe, one bit of a tribe—to differ from another is their relative faculty of coherence. The slightest symptom of legal development, the least indication of a military bond, is then enough to turn the scale. The compact tribes win, and the compact tribes are the tamest. Civilisation begins, because the beginning of civilisation is a military advantage.

Probably if we had historic records of the ante-historic ages—if some superhuman power had set down the thoughts and actions of men ages before they could set them down for themselves—we should know that this first step in civilisation was the hardest step. But when we come to history as it is, we are more struck with the difficulty of the next step. All the absolutely incoherent men—all the "Cyclopes"—have been cleared away long before there was an authentic account of them. And the least coherent only remain in the "protected" parts of the world, as we may call them. Ordinary civilisation begins near the Mediterranean Sea; the best, doubtless, of the ante-historic civilisations were not far off. From this centre the conquering *swarm*—for such it is—has grown and grown; has widened its subject territories steadily, though not equably, age by age. But geography long defied it. An Atlantic Ocean, a Pacific Ocean, an Australian Ocean, an unapproachable interior Africa, an inaccessible and undesirable hill India, were beyond its range. In such remote

[1] *Ethnological Society's Transactions*, vol. iii., p. 137.

places there was no real competition, and on them inferior half-combined men continued to exist. But in the regions of rivalry—the regions where the better man pressed upon the worse man—such half-made associations could not last. They died out, and history did not begin till after they were gone. The great difficulty which history records is not that of the first step, but that of the second step. What is most evident is not the difficulty of getting a fixed law, but getting out of a fixed law; not of cementing (as upon a former occasion I phrased it) a cake of custom, but of breaking the cake of custom; not of making the first preservative habit, but of breaking through it, and reaching something better.

This is the precise case with the whole family of arrested civilisations. A large part, a very large part, of the world seems to be ready to advance to something good—to have prepared all the means to advance to something good,—and then to have stopped, and not advanced. India, Japan, China, almost every sort of Oriental civilisation, though differing in nearly all other things, are in this alike. They look as if they had paused when there was no reason for pausing—when a mere observer from without would say they were likely not to pause.

The reason is, that only those nations can progress which preserve and use the fundamental peculiarity which was given by nature to man's organism as to all other organisms. By a law of which we know no reason, but which is among the first by which Providence guides and governs the world, there is a tendency in descendants to be like their progenitors, and yet a tendency also in descendants to *differ* from their progenitors. The work of nature in making generations is a patchwork—part resemblance, part contrast. In certain respects each born generation is not like the last born; and in certain other respects it is like the last. But the peculiarity of arrested civilisation is to kill out varieties at birth almost; that is, in early childhood, and before they can develop. The fixed custom which public opinion alone tolerates is imposed on all minds, whether it suits them or not. In that case the community feel that this custom is the only

shelter from bare tyranny, and the only security for what they value. Most Oriental communities live on land which in theory is the property of a despotic sovereign, and neither they nor their families could have the elements of decent existence unless they held the land upon some sort of fixed terms. Land in that state of society is (for all but a petty skilled minority) a necessary of life, and all the unincreasable land being occupied, a man who is turned out of his holding is turned out of this world, and must die. And our notion of written leases is as out of place in a world without writing and without reading as a House of Commons among Andaman Islanders. Only one check, one sole shield for life and good, is then possible;—usage. And it is but too plain how in such places and periods men cling to customs because customs alone stand between them and starvation.

A still more powerful cause co-operated, if a cause more powerful can be imagined. Dryden had a dream of an early age, "when wild in woods the noble savage ran"; but "when lone in woods the cringing savage crept" would have been more like all we know of that early, bare, painful period. Not only had they no comfort, no convenience, not the very beginnings of an epicurean life, but their mind within was as painful to them as the world without. It was full of fear. So far as the vestiges inform us, they were afraid of everything; they were afraid of animals, of certain attacks by near tribes, and of possible inroads from far tribes. But, above all things, they were frightened of "the world"; the spectacle of nature filled them with awe and dread. They fancied there were powers behind it which must be pleased, soothed, flattered, and this very often in a number of hideous ways. We have too many such religions, even among races of great cultivation. Men change their religions more slowly than they change anything else; and accordingly we have religions "of the ages"—(it is Mr. Jowett who so calls them)—of the "ages before morality;" of ages of which the civil life, the common maxims, and all the secular thoughts have long been dead. "Every reader of the classics," said Dr. Johnson, "finds their mythology tedious." In that old world, which is so like our

modern world in so many things, so much more like than many far more recent, or some that live beside us, there is a part in which we seem to have no kindred, which we stare at, of which we cannot think how it could be credible, or how it came to be thought of. This is the archaic part of that very world which we look at as so ancient; an "antiquity" which descended to them, hardly altered, perhaps, from times long antecedent, which were as unintelligible to them as to us, or more so. How this terrible religion—for such it was in all living detail, though we make, and the ancients then made, an artistic use of the more attractive bits of it—weighed on man, the great poem or Lucretius, the most of a nineteenth-century poem of any in antiquity, brings before us with a feeling so vivid as to be almost a feeling of our own. Yet the classical religion is a mild and tender specimen of the preserved religions. To get at the worst, you should look where the destroying competition has been least—at America, where sectional civilisation was rare, and a pervading coercive civilisation did not exist; at such religions as those of the Aztecs.

At first sight it seems impossible to imagine what conceivable function such awful religions can perform in the economy of the world. And no one can fully explain them. But one use they assuredly had: they fixed the yoke of custom thoroughly on mankind. They were the prime agents of the era. They put upon a fixed law a sanction so fearful that no one could dream of not conforming to it.

No one will ever comprehend the arrested civilisations unless he sees the strict dilemma of early society. Either men had no law at all, and lived in confused tribes, hardly hanging together, or they had to obtain a fixed law by processes of incredible difficulty. Those who surmounted that difficulty soon destroyed all those that lay in their way who did not. And then they themselves were caught in their own yoke. The customary discipline, which could only be imposed on any early men by terrible sanctions, continued with those sanctions, and killed out of the whole society the propensities to variation which are the principle of progress.

Experience shows how incredibly difficult it is to get men

really to encourage the principle of originality. They will admit it in theory, but in practice the old error—the error which arrested a hundred civilisations—returns again. Men are too fond of their own life, too credulous of the completeness of their own ideas, too angry at the pain of new thoughts, to be able to bear easily with a changing existence; or else, *having* new ideas, they want to enforce them on mankind—to make them heard, and admitted, and obeyed before, in simple competition with other ideas, they would ever be so naturally. At this very moment there are the most rigid Comtists teaching that we ought to be governed by a hierarchy—a combination of *savans* orthodox in science. Yet who can doubt that Comte would have been hanged by his own hierarchy; that his *essor matériel*, which was in fact troubled by the "theologians and metaphysicians" of the Polytechnic School, would have been more impeded by the government he wanted to make? And then the secular Comtists, Mr. Harrison and Mr. Beesly, who want to "Frenchify the English institutions"—that is, to introduce here an imitation of the Napoleonic system, a dictatorship founded on the proletariat—who can doubt that if both these clever writers had been real Frenchmen they would have been irascible anti-Bonapartists, and have been sent to Cayenne long ere now? The wish of these writers is very natural. They want to "organise society," to erect a despot who will do what they like, and work out their ideas; but any despot will do what he himself likes, and will root out new ideas ninety-nine times for once that he introduces them.

Again, side by side with these Comtists, and warring with them—at least with one of them—is Mr. Arnold, whose poems we know by heart, and who has, as much as any living Englishman, the genuine literary impulse; and yet even he wants to put a yoke upon us—and, worse than a political yoke, an academic yoke, a yoke upon our minds and our styles. He, too, asks us to imitate France; and what else can we say than what the two most thorough Frenchmen of the last age did say?—"Dans les corps à talent, nulle distinction ne fait ombrage, si ce n'est pas celle du talent. Un duc et pair honore l'Académie Française, qui ne veut point de Boileau, refuse la

Bruyère, fait attendre Voltaire, mais reçoit tout d'abord Chapelain et Conrart. De même nous voyons à l'Académie Grecque le vicomte invité, Coräi repoussé, lorsque Jormard y entre comme dans un moulin." Thus speaks Paul-Louis Courier in his own brief inimitable prose. And a still greater writer —a real Frenchman, if ever there was one, and (what many critics would have denied to be possible) a great poet by reason of his *most* French characteristics—Béranger, tells us in verse :—

Je croyais voir le président
Faire bâiller—en répondant
Que l'on vient de perdre un grand homme ;
Que moi je le vaux, Dieu sait comme.
Mais ce président sans façon [1]
Ne pérore ici qu'en chanson :
Toujours trop tôt sa harangue est finie.
Non, non, ce n'est point comme à l'Académie ;
Ce n'est point comme à l'Académie.

Admis enfin, aurai-je alors,
Pour tout esprit, l'esprit de corps ?
Il rend le bon sens, quoi qu'on dise,
Solidaire de la sottise ;
Mais, dans votre société,
L'esprit de corps, c'est la gaîté.
Cet esprit là règne sans tyrannie.
Non, non, ce n'est point comme à l'Académie ;
Ce n'est point comme à l'Académie.

Asylums of commonplace, he hints, academies must ever be. But that sentence is too harsh; the true one is—the academies are asylums of the ideas and the tastes of the last age. "By the time," I have heard a most eminent man of science observe, "by the time a man of science attains eminence on any subject, he becomes a nuisance upon it, because he is sure to retain errors which were in vogue when he was young, but which the new race have refuted." These are the sort of ideas which find their home in academies, and out of their dignified windows pooh-pooh new things.

I may seem to have wandered far from early society, but

[1] Désaugiers.

I have not wandered. The true scientific method is to explain the past by the present—what we see by what we do not see. We can only comprehend why so many nations have not varied, when we see how hateful variation is; how everybody turns against it; how not only the conservatives of speculation try to root it out, but the very innovators invent most rigid machines for crushing the "monstrosities and anomalies"—the new forms, out of which, by competition and trial, the best is to be selected for the future. The point I am bringing out is simple:—one most important prerequisite of a prevailing nation is that it should have passed out of the first stage of civilisation into the second stage—out of the stage where permanence is most wanted into that where variability is most wanted; and you cannot comprehend why progress is so slow till you see how hard the most obstinate tendencies of human nature make that step to mankind.

Of course the nation we are supposing must keep the virtues of its first stage as it passes into the after stage, else it will be trodden out; it will have lost the savage virtues in getting the beginning of the civilised virtues; and the savage virtues which tend to war are the daily bread of human nature. Carlyle said, in his graphic way, "The ultimate question between every two human beings is, 'Can I kill thee, or canst thou kill me?'" History is strewn with the wrecks of nations which have gained a little progressiveness at the cost of a great deal of hard manliness, and have thus prepared themselves for destruction as soon as the movements of the world gave a chance for it. But these nations have come out of the "pre-economic stage" too soon; they have been put to learn while yet only too apt to unlearn. Such cases do not vitiate, they confirm, the principle—that a nation which has just gained variability without losing legality has a singular likelihood to be a prevalent nation.

No nation admits of an abstract definition; all nations are beings of many qualities and many sides; no historical event exactly illustrates any one principle; every cause is intertwined and surrounded with a hundred others. The best history is but like the art of Rembrandt; it casts a vivid light on certain

selected causes, on those which were best and greatest; it leaves all the rest in shadow and unseen. To make a single nation illustrate a principle, you must exaggerate much and you must omit much. But, not forgetting this caution, did not Rome—the prevalent nation in the ancient world—gain her predominance by the principle on which I have dwelt? In the thick crust of her legality there was hidden a little seed of adaptiveness. Even in her law itself no one can fail to see that, binding as was the habit of obedience, coercive as use and wont at first seem, a hidden impulse of extrication *did* manage, in some queer way, to change the substance while conforming to the accidents—to do what was wanted for the new time while seeming to do only what was directed by the old time. And the moral of their whole history is the same; each Roman generation, so far as we know, differs a little—and in the best times often but a *very* little—from its predecessors. And therefore the history is so continuous as it goes, though its two ends are so unlike. The history of many nations is like the stage of the English drama: one scene is succeeded on a sudden by a scene quite different,—a cottage by a palace, and a windmill by a fortress. But the history of Rome changes as a good diorama changes; while you look, you hardly see it alter; each moment is hardly different from the last moment; yet at the close the metamorphosis is complete, and scarcely anything is as it began. Just so in the history of the great prevailing city; you begin with a town and you end with an empire, and this by unmarked stages. So shrouded, so shielded, in the coarse fibre of other qualities was the delicate principle of progress, that it never failed, and it was never broken.

One standing instance, no doubt, shows that the union of progressiveness and legality does not secure supremacy in war. The Jewish nation has its type of progress in the prophets, side by side with its type of permanence in the law and Levites, more distinct than any other ancient people. Nowhere in common history do we see the two forces—both so necessary and both so dangerous—so apart and so intense: Judæa changed in inward thought, just as Rome changed in exterior

power. Each change was continuous, gradual, and good. In early times every sort of advantage tends to become a military advantage; such as the best way, then, to keep it alive. But the Jewish advantage never did so; beginning in religion, contrary to a thousand analogies, it remained religious. *For* that we care for them; *from* that have issued endless consequences. But I cannot deal with such matters here, nor are they to my purpose. As respects this essay, Judæa is an example of combined variability and legality not investing itself in warlike power, and so perishing at last, but bequeathing nevertheless a legacy of the combination in imperishable mental effects.

It may be objected that this principle is like saying that men walk when they do walk, and sit when they do sit. The problem is, why do men progress? And the answer suggested seems to be, that they progress when they have a certain sufficient amount of variability in their nature. This seems to be the old style of explanation by occult qualities. It seems like saying that opium sends men to sleep because it has a soporific virtue, and bread feeds because it has an alimentary quality. But the explanation is not so absurd. It says: "The beginning of civilisation is marked by an intense legality; that legality is the very condition of its existence, the bond which ties it together; but that legality—that tendency to impose a settled customary yoke upon all men and all actions—if it goes on, kills out the variability implanted by nature, and makes different men and different ages facsimiles of other men and other ages, as we see them so often. Progress is only possible in those happy cases where the force of legality has gone far enough to bind the nation together, but not far enough to kill out all varieties and destroy nature's perpetual tendency to change." The point of the solution is not the invention of an imaginary agency, but an assignment of comparative magnitude to two known agencies.

III.

This advantage is one of the greatest in early civilisation —one of the facts which give a decisive turn to the battle of

nations; but there are many others. A little perfection in *political institutions* may do it. Travellers have noticed that among savage tribes those seemed to answer best in which the monarchical power was most predominant, and those worst in which the "rule of many" was in its vigour. So long as war is the main business of nations, temporary despotism—despotism during the campaign—is indispensable. Macaulay justly said that many an army has prospered under a bad commander, but no army has ever prospered under a "debating society"; that many-headed monster is then fatal. Despotism grows in the first societies, just as democracy grows in more modern societies; it is the Government answering the primary need, and congenial to the whole spirit of the time. But despotism is unfavourable to the principle of variability, as all history shows. It tends to keep men in the customary stage of civilisation; its very fitness for that age unfits it for the next. It prevents men from passing into the first age of progress—the *very* slow and *very* gradually improving age. Some "standing system" of semi-free discussion is as necessary to break the thick crust of custom and begin progress as it is in later ages to carry on progress when begun; probably it is even more necessary. And in the most progressive races we find it. I have spoken already of the Jewish prophets, the life of that nation, and the principle of all its growth. But a still more progressive race—that by which secular civilisation was once created, by which it is now mainly administered—had a still better instrument of progression. "In the very earliest glimpses," says Mr. Freeman, "of Teutonic political life, we find the monarchic, the aristocratic, and the democratic elements already clearly marked. There are leaders with or without the royal title; there are men of noble birth, whose noble birth (in whatever the original nobility may have consisted) entitles them to a pre-eminence in every way; but beyond these there is a free and armed people, in whom it is clear that the ultimate sovereignty resides. Small matters are decided by the chiefs alone; great matters are submitted by the chiefs to the assembled nation. Such a system is far more than Teutonic; it is a common Aryan possession; it is the constitution of the Homeric

Achaians on earth and of the Homeric gods on Olympus." Perhaps, and indeed probably, this constitution may be that of the primitive tribe which Romans left to go one way, and Greeks to go another, and Teutons to go a third. The tribe took it with them, as the English take the common law with them, because it was the one kind of polity which they could conceive and act upon; or it may be that the emigrants from the primitive Aryan stock only took with them a good aptitude —an excellent political nature, which similar circumstances in distant countries were afterwards to develop into like forms. But anyhow it is impossible not to trace the supremacy of Teutons, Greeks, and Romans in part to their common form of government. The contests of the assembly cherished the principle of change; the influence of the elders insured sedateness and preserved the mould of thought; and, in the best cases, military discipline was not impaired by freedom, though military intelligence was enhanced with the general intelligence. A Roman army was a free body, at its own choice governed by a peremptory despotism.

The *mixture of races* was often an advantage, too. Much as the old world believed in pure blood, it had very little of it. Most historic nations conquered pre-historic nations, and though they massacred many, they did not massacre all. They enslaved the subject men, and they married the subject women. No doubt the whole bond of early society was the bond of descent; no doubt it was essential to the notions of a new nation that it should have had common ancestors; the modern idea that vicinity of habitation is the natural cement of civil union would have been repelled as an impiety if it could have been conceived as an idea. But by one of those legal fictions which Sir Henry Maine describes so well, primitive nations contrived to do what they found convenient, as well as to adhere to what they fancied to be right. When they did not beget they *adopted;* they solemnly made believe that new persons were descended from the old stock, though everybody knew that in flesh and blood they were not. They made an artificial unity in default of a real unity; and what it is not easy to understand now, the sacred sentiment requiring unity

of race was somehow satisfied: what was made did as well as what was born. Nations with these sort of maxims are not likely to have unity of race in the modern sense, and as a physiologist understands it. What sorts of unions improve the breed, and which are worse than both the father-race and the mother, it is not very easy to say. The subject was reviewed by M. Quatrefages in an elaborate report upon the occasion of the French Exhibition, of all things in the world. M. Quatrefages quotes from another writer the phrase that South America is a great laboratory of experiments in the mixture of races, and reviews the different results which different cases have shown. In South Carolina the mulatto race is not very prolific, whereas in Louisiana and Florida it decidedly is so. In Jamaica and in Java the mulatto cannot reproduce itself after the third generation; but on the continent of America, as everybody knows, the mixed race is now most numerous, and spreads generation after generation without impediment. Equally various likewise in various cases has been the fate of the mixed race between the white man and the native American; sometimes it prospers, sometimes it fails. And M. Quatrefages concludes his description thus: "En acceptant comme vraies toutes les observations qui tendent à faire admettre qu'il en sera autrement dans les localités dont j'ai parlé plus haut, quelle est la conclusion à tirer de faits aussi peu semblables? Evidemment, on est obligé de reconnaître que le développement de la race mulâtre est favorisé, retardé, ou empêché par des circonstances locales; en d'autres termes, qu'il dépend des influences exercées par l'ensemble des conditions d'existence, par le *milieu*." By which I understand him to mean that the mixture of race sometimes brings out a form of character better suited than either parent form to the place and time; that in such cases, by a kind of natural selection, it dominates over both parents, and perhaps supplants both, whereas in other cases the mixed race is not as good then and there as other parent forms, and then it passes away soon and of itself.

Early in history the continual mixtures by conquest were just so many experiments in mixing races as are going on in South America now. New races wandered into new districts,

and half killed, half mixed with the old races. And the result was doubtless as various and as difficult to account for then as now; sometimes the crossing answered, sometimes it failed. But when the mixture was at its best, it must have excelled both parents in that of which so much has been said; that is, variability, and consequently progressiveness. There is more life in mixed nations. France, for instance, is justly said to be the mean term between the Latin and the German races. A Norman, as you may see by looking at him, is of the north; a Provençal is of the south, of all that there is most southern. You have in France Latin, Celtic, German, compounded in an infinite number of proportions: one as she is in feeling, she is various not only in the past history of her various provinces, but in their present temperaments. Like the Irish element and the Scotch element in the English House of Commons, the variety of French races contributes to the play of the polity; it gives a chance for fitting new things which otherwise there would not be. And early races must have wanted mixing more than modern races. It is said, in answer to the Jewish boast that "their race still prospers, though it is scattered and breeds in-and-in," "You prosper *because* you are so scattered; by acclimatisation in various regions your nation has acquired singular elements of variety; it contains within itself the principle of variability which other nations must seek by intermarriage." In the beginning of things there was certainly no cosmopolitan race like the Jews; each race was a sort of "parish race," narrow in thought and bounded in range, and it wanted mixing accordingly.

But the mixture of races has a singular danger as well as a singular advantage in the early world. We know now the Anglo-Indian suspicion or contempt for "half-castes". The union of the Englishman and the Hindoo produces something not only between races, but *between moralities*. They have no inherited creed or plain place in the world; they have none of the fixed traditional sentiments which are the stays of human nature. In the early world many mixtures must have wrought many ruins; they must have destroyed what they could not replace—an inbred principle of discipline and of order. But

if these unions of races did not work thus; if, for example, the two races were so near akin that their morals united as well as their breeds, if one race by its great numbers and prepotent organisation so presided over the other as to take it up and assimilate it, and leave no separate remains of it, *then* the admixture was invaluable. It added to the probability of variability, and therefore of improvement; and if that improvement even in part took the military line, it might give the mixed and ameliorated state a steady advantage in the battle of nations, and a greater chance of lasting in the world.

Another mode in which one state acquires a superiority over competing states is by *provisional* institutions, if I may so call them. The most important of these—slavery—arises out of the same early conquest as the mixture of races. A slave is an unassimilated, an undigested atom; something which is in the body politic, but yet is hardly part of it. Slavery, too, has a bad name in the later world, and very justly. We connect it with gangs in chains, with laws which keep men ignorant, with laws that hinder families. But the evils which we have endured from slavery in recent ages must not blind us to, or make us forget, the great services that slavery rendered in early ages. There is a wonderful presumption in its favour; it is one of the institutions which, at a certain stage of growth, all nations in all countries choose and cleave to. "Slavery," says Aristotle, "exists by the law of nature," meaning that it was everywhere to be found—was a rudimentary universal point of polity. "There are very many English colonies," said Edward Gibbon Wakefield, as late as 1848, "who would keep slaves at once if we would let them," and he was speaking not only of old colonies trained in slavery, and raised upon the products of it, but likewise of new colonies started by freemen, and which ought, one would think, to wish to contain freemen only. But Wakefield knew what he was saying; he was a careful observer of rough societies, and he had watched the minds of men in them. He had seen that *leisure* is the great need of early societies, and slaves only can give men leisure. All freemen in new countries must be pretty equal; every one has labour, and every one

has land; capital, at least in agricultural countries (for pastoral countries are very different), is of little use; it cannot hire labour; the labourers go and work for themselves. There is a story often told of a great English capitalist who went out to Australia with a shipload of labourers and a carriage; his plan was that the labourers should build a house for him, and that he would keep his carriage, just as in England. But (so the story goes) he had to try to live in his carriage, for his labourers left him, and went away to work for themselves.

In such countries there can be few gentlemen and no ladies. Refinement is only possible when leisure is possible; and slavery first makes it possible. It creates a set of persons born to work that others may not work, and not to think in order that others may think. The sort of originality which slavery gives is of the first practical advantage in early communities; and the repose it gives is a great artistic advantage when they come to be described in history. The patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob could not have had the steady calm which marks them, if they had themselves been teased and hurried about their flocks and herds. Refinement of feeling and repose of appearance have indeed no market value in the early bidding of nations; they do not tend to secure themselves a long future or any future. But originality in war does, and slave-owning nations, having time to think, are likely to be more shrewd in policy, and more crafty in strategy.

No doubt this momentary gain is bought at a ruinous after-cost. When other sources of leisure become possible, the one use of slavery is past. But all its evils remain, and even grow worse. "Retail" slavery—the slavery in which a master owns a few slaves, whom he well knows and daily sees—is not at all an intolerable state; the slaves of Abraham had no doubt a fair life, as things went in that day. But wholesale slavery, where men are but one of the investments of large capital, and where a great owner, so far from knowing each slave, can hardly tell how many gangs of them he works, is an abominable state. This is the slavery which has made the name revolting to the best minds, and has nearly rooted the thing out of the best of the world. There is no out-of-the-

way marvel in this. The whole history of civilisation is strewn with creeds and institutions which were invaluable at first, and deadly afterwards. Progress would not have been the rarity it is if the early food had not been the late poison. A full examination of these provisional institutions would need half a volume, and would be out of place and useless here. Venerable oligarchy, august monarchy, are two that would alone need large chapters. But the sole point here necessary is to say that such preliminary forms and feelings at first often bring many graces and many refinements, and often tend to secure them by the preservative military virtue.

There are cases in which some step in *intellectual* progress gives an early society some gain in war; more obvious cases are when some kind of *moral* quality gives some such gain. War both needs and generates certain virtues; not the highest, but what may be called the preliminary virtues, as valour, veracity, the spirit of obedience, the habit of discipline. Any of these, and of others like them, when possessed by a nation, and no matter how generated, will give them a military advantage, and make them more likely to *stay* in the race of nations. The Romans probably had as much of these efficacious virtues as any race of the ancient world,—perhaps as much as any race in the modern world too. And the success of the nations which possess these martial virtues has been the great means by which their continuance has been secured in the world, and the destruction of the opposite vices ensured also. Conquest is the missionary of valour, and the hard impact of military virtues beats meanness out of the world.

In the last century it would have sounded strange to speak, as I am going to speak, of the military advantage of *religion*. Such an idea would have been opposed to ruling prejudices, and would hardly have escaped philosophical ridicule. But the notion is but a commonplace in our day, for a man of genius has made it his own. Mr. Carlyle's books are deformed by phrases like "infinities" and "verities," and altogether are full of faults, which attract the very young, and deter all that are older. In spite of his great genius, after a long life of writing, it is a question still whether even a single work of his

can take a lasting place in high literature. There is a want of sanity in their manner which throws a suspicion on their substance (though it is often profound); and he brandishes one or two fallacies, of which he has himself a high notion, but which plain people will always detect and deride. But whatever may be the fate of his fame, Mr. Carlyle has taught the present generation many lessons, and one of these is that "God-fearing" armies are the best armies. Before his time people laughed at Cromwell's saying, "Trust in God, and keep your powder dry"." But we now know that the trust was of as much use as the powder, if not of more. That high concentration of steady feeling makes men dare everything and do anything.

This subject would run to an infinite extent if any one were competent to handle it. Those kinds of morals and that kind of religion which tend to make the firmest and most effectual character are sure to prevail, all else being the same; and creeds or systems that conduce to a soft limp mind tend to perish, except some hard extrinsic force keep them alive. Thus Epicureanism never prospered at Rome, but Stoicism did; the stiff, serious character of the great prevailing nation was attracted by what seemed a confirming creed, and deterred by what looked like a relaxing creed. The inspiriting doctrines fell upon the ardent character, and so confirmed its energy. Strong beliefs win strong men, and then make them stronger. Such is no doubt one cause why Monotheism tends to prevail over Polytheism; it produces a higher, steadier character, calmed and concentrated by a great single object; it is not confused by competing rites, or distracted by miscellaneous deities. Polytheism is religion *in commission*, and it is weak accordingly. But it will be said the Jews, who were monotheist, were conquered by the Romans, who were polytheist. Yes, it must be answered, because the Romans had other gifts; they had a capacity for politics, a habit of discipline, and of these the Jews had not the least. The religious advantage *was* an advantage, but it was counterweighed.

No one should be surprised at the prominence given to

war. We are dealing with early ages; nation-*making* is the occupation of man in these ages, and it is war that makes nations. Nation-*changing* comes afterwards, and is mostly effected by peaceful revolution, though even then war, too, plays its part. The idea of an indestructible nation is a modern idea; in early ages all nations were destructible, and the further we go back, the more incessant was the work of destruction. The internal decoration of nations is a sort of secondary process, which succeeds when the main forces that create nations have principally done their work. We have here been concerned with the political scaffolding; it will be the task of other papers to trace the process of political finishing and building. The nicer play of finer forces may then require more pleasing thoughts than the fierce fights of early ages can ever suggest. It belongs to the idea of progress that beginnings can never seem attractive to those who live far on; the price of improvement is, that the unimproved will always look degraded.

But how far are the strongest nations really the best nations? how far is excellence in war a criterion of other excellence? I cannot answer this now fully, but three or four considerations are very plain. War, as I have said, nourishes the "preliminary" virtues, and this is almost as much as to say that there are virtues which it does not nourish. All which may be called "grace" as well as virtue it does not nourish; humanity, charity, a nice sense of the rights of others, it certainly does not foster. The insensibility to human suffering, which is so striking a fact in the world as it stood when history first reveals it, is doubtless due to the warlike origin of the old civilisation. Bred in war, and nursed in war, it could not revolt from the things of war, and one of the principal of these is human pain. Since war has ceased to be the moving force in the world, men have become more tender one to another, and shrink from what they used to inflict without caring; and this not so much because men are improved (which may or may not be in various cases), but because they have no longer the daily habit of war—have no longer formed their notions upon war, and therefore are guided by thoughts

and feelings which soldiers as such—soldiers educated simply by their trade—are too hard to understand.

Very like this is the contempt for physical weakness and for women which marks early society too. The non-combatant population is sure to fare ill during the ages of combat. But these defects, too, are cured or lessened; women have now marvellous means of winning their way in the world; and mind without muscle has far greater force than muscle without mind. These are some of the after-changes in the interior of nations, of which the causes must be scrutinised, and I now mention them only to bring out how many softer growths have now half-hidden the old and harsh civilisation which war made.

But it is very dubious whether the spirit of war does not still colour our morality far too much. Metaphors from law and metaphors from war make most of our current moral phrases, and a nice examination would easily explain that both rather vitiate what both often illustrate. The military habit makes man think far too much of definite action, and far too little of brooding meditation. Life is not a set campaign, but an irregular work, and the main forces in it are not overt resolutions, but latent and half-involuntary promptings. The mistake of military ethics is to exaggerate the conception of discipline, and so to present the moral force of the will in a barer form than it ever ought to take. Military morals can direct the axe to cut down the tree, but it knows nothing of the quiet force by which the forest grows.

What has been said is enough, I hope, to bring out that there are many qualities and many institutions of the most various sort which give nations an advantage in military competition; that most of these and most warlike qualities tend principally to good; that the constant winning of these favoured competitors is the particular mode by which the best qualities wanted in elementary civilisation are propagated and preserved.

No. III.

NATION-MAKING.

In the last essay I endeavoured to show that in the early age of man—the "fighting age" I called it—there was a considerable, though not certain, tendency towards progress. The best nations conquered the worst; by the possession of one advantage or another the best competitor overcame the inferior competitor. So long as there was continual fighting there was a likelihood of improvement in martial virtues, and in early times many virtues are really "martial"—that is, tend to success in war—which in later times we do not think of so calling, because the original usefulness is hid by their later usefulness. We judge of them by the present effects, not by their first. The love of law, for example, is a virtue which no one now would call martial, yet in early times it disciplined nations, and the disciplined nations won. The gift of "conservative innovation"—the gift of *matching* new institutions to old—is not nowadays a warlike virtue, yet the Romans owed much of their success to it. Alone among ancient nations they had the deference to usage which combines nations, and the partial permission of selected change which improves nations; and therefore they succeeded. Just so in most cases, all through the earliest times, martial merit is a token of real merit: the nation that wins is the nation that ought to win. The simple virtues of such ages mostly make a man a soldier if they make him anything. No doubt the brute force of number may be too potent even then (as so often it is afterwards): civilisation may be thrown back by the conquest of many very rude men over a few less rude men. But the first elements of civilisation are great military advantages, and, roughly, it is a rule of the first times that you can infer merit from conquest, and that progress is promoted by the competitive examination of constant war.

This principle explains at once why the "protected" regions of the world—the interior of continents like Africa, outlying islands like Australia or New Zealand—are of necessity

backward. They are still in the preparatory school; they have not been taken on class by class, as No. II., being a little better, routed and effaced No. I.; and as No. III., being a little better still, routed and effaced No. II. And it explains why Western Europe was early in advance of other countries, because there the contest of races was exceedingly severe. Unlike most regions, it was a tempting part of the world, and yet not a corrupting part; those who did not possess it wanted it, and those who had it, not being enervated, could struggle hard to keep it. The conflict of nations is at first a main force in the improvement of nations.

But what *are* nations? What are these groups which are so familiar to us, and yet, if we stop to think, so strange; which are as old as history; which Herodotus found in almost as great numbers and with quite as marked distinctions as we see them now? What breaks the human race up into fragments so unlike one another, and yet each in its interior so monotonous? The question is most puzzling, though the fact is so familiar, and I would not venture to say that I can answer it completely, though I can advance some considerations which, as it seems to me, go a certain way towards answering it. Perhaps these same considerations throw some light, too, on the further and still more interesting question why some few nations progress, and why the greater part do not.

Of course at first all such distinctions of nation and nation were explained by original diversity of race. They *are* dissimilar, it was said, because they were created dissimilar. But in most cases this easy supposition will not do its work. You cannot (consistently with plain facts) imagine enough original races to make it tenable. Some half-dozen or more great families of men may or may not have been descended from separate first stocks, but sub-varieties have certainly not so descended. You may argue, rightly or wrongly, that all Aryan nations are of a single or peculiar origin, just as it was long believed that all Greek-speaking nations were of one such stock. But you will not be listened to if you say that there were one Adam and Eve for Sparta, and another Adam and Eve for Athens. All Greeks are evidently of one origin, but

within the limits of the Greek family, as of all other families, there is some contrast-making force which causes city to be unlike city, and tribe unlike tribe.

Certainly, too, nations did not originate by simple natural selection, as wild varieties of animals (I do not speak now of species) no doubt arise in nature. Natural selection means the preservation of those individuals which struggle best with the forces that oppose their race. But you could not show that the natural obstacles opposing human life much differed between Sparta and Athens, or indeed between Rome and Athens; and yet Spartans, Athenians, and Romans differ essentially. Old writers fancied (and it was a very natural idea) that the direct effect of climate, or rather of land, sea, and air, and the sum total of physical conditions varied man from man, and changed race to race. But experience refutes this. The English immigrant lives in the same climate as the Australian or Tasmanian, but he has not become like those races; nor will a thousand years, in most respects, make him like them. The Papuan and the Malay, as Mr. Wallace finds, live now, and have lived for ages, side by side in the same tropical regions, with every sort of diversity. Even in animals his researches show, as by an object-lesson, that the direct efficacy of physical conditions is overrated. "Borneo," he says, "closely resembles New Guinea, not only in its vast size and freedom from volcanoes, but in its variety of geological structure, its uniformity of climate, and the general aspect of the forest vegetation that clothes its surface. The Moluccas are the counterpart of the Philippines in their volcanic structure, their extreme fertility, their luxuriant forests, and their frequent earthquakes; and Bali, with the east end of Java, has a climate almost as arid as that of Timor. Yet between these corresponding groups of islands, constructed, as it were, after the same pattern, subjected to the same climate, and bathed by the same oceans, there exists the greatest possible contrast, when we compare their animal productions. Nowhere does the ancient doctrine—that differences or similarities in the various forms of life that inhabit different countries are due to corresponding physical differences or

similarities in the countries themselves—meet with so direct and palpable a contradiction. Borneo and New Guinea, as alike physically as two distinct countries can be, are zoologically as wide as the poles asunder; while Australia, with its dry winds, its open plains, its stony deserts and its temperate climate, yet produces birds and quadrupeds which are closely related to those inhabiting the hot, damp, luxuriant forests which everywhere clothe the plains and mountains of New Guinea." That is, we have like living things in the most dissimilar situations, and unlike living things in the most similar ones. And though some of Mr. Wallace's speculations on ethnology may be doubtful, no one doubts that in the archipelago he has studied so well, as often elsewhere in the world, though rarely with such marked emphasis, we find like men in contrasted places, and unlike men in resembling places. Climate is clearly not *the* force which makes nations, for it does not always make them, and they are often made without it.

The problem of "nation-making"—that is, the explanation of the origin of nations such as we now see them, and such as in historical times they have always been—cannot, as it seems to me, be solved without separating it into two: one, the making of broadly marked races, such as the negro, or the red man, or the European; and the second, that of making the minor distinctions, such as the distinction between Spartan and Athenian, or between Scotchman and Englishman. Nations, as we see them, are (if my arguments prove true) the produce of two great forces: one the race-making force which, whatever it was, acted in antiquity, and has now wholly, or almost, given over acting; and the other the nation-making force, properly so called, which is acting now as much as it ever acted, and creating as much as it ever created.

The strongest light on the great causes which have formed and are forming nations is thrown by the smaller causes which are altering nations. The way in which nations change, generation after generation, is exceedingly curious, and the change occasionally happens when it is very hard to account for. Something seems to steal over society, say of the Regency time as compared with that of the present Queen. If we read

of life at Windsor (at the cottage now pulled down), or of Bond Street as it was in the days of the Loungers (an extinct race), or of St. James's Street as it was when Mr. Fox and his party tried to make "political capital" out of the dissipation of an heir apparent, we seem to be reading not of the places we know so well, but of very distant and unlike localities. Or let any one think how little is the external change in England between the age of Elizabeth and the age of Anne compared with the national change. How few were the alterations in physical condition, how few (if any) the scientific inventions affecting human life which the later period possessed, but the earlier did not! How hard it is to say what has caused the change in the people! And yet how total is the contrast, at least at first sight! In passing from Bacon to Addison, from Shakespeare to Pope, we seem to pass into a new world.

In the first of these essays I spoke of the mode in which the literary change happens, and I recur to it because, literature being narrower and more definite than life, a change in the less serves as a model and illustration of the change in the greater. Some writer, as was explained, not necessarily a very excellent writer or a remembered one, hit on something which suited the public taste: he went on writing, and others imitated him, and they so accustomed their readers to that style that they would bear nothing else. Those readers who did not like it were driven to the works of other ages and other countries,—had to despise the "trash of the day," as they would call it. The age of Anne patronised Steele, the beginner of the essay, and Addison its perfecter, and it neglected writings in a wholly discordant key. I have heard that the founder of the *Times* was asked how all the articles in the *Times* came to seem to be written by one man, and that he replied—"Oh, there is always some one best contributor, and all the rest copy". And this is doubtless the true account of the manner in which a certain trade mark, a curious and indefinable unity, settles on every newspaper. Perhaps it would be possible to name the men who a few years since created the *Saturday Review* style, now imitated by another and a younger race. But when the style of a periodical is once formed, the continuance of it

is preserved by a much more despotic impulse than the tendency to imitation,—by the self-interest of the editor, who acts as *trustee*, if I may say so, for the subscribers. The regular buyers of a periodical want to read what they have been used to read —the same sort of thought, the same sort of words. The editor sees that they get that sort. He selects the suitable, the conforming articles, and he rejects the non-conforming. What the editor does in the case of a periodical, the readers do in the case of literature in general. They patronise one thing and reject the rest.

Of course there was always some reason (if we only could find it) which gave the prominence in each age to some particular winning literature. There always is some reason why the fashion of female dress is what it is. But just as in the case of dress we know that nowadays the determining cause is very much of an accident, so in the case of literary fashion, the origin is a good deal of an accident. What the milliners of Paris, or the *demi-monde* of Paris, enjoin our English ladies, is (I suppose) a good deal chance; but as soon as it is decreed, those whom it suits and those whom it does not all wear it. The imitative propensity at once ensures uniformity; and "that horrid thing we wore last year" (as the phrase may go) is soon nowhere to be seen. Just so a literary fashion spreads, though I am far from saying with equal primitive unreasonableness—a literary taste always begins on some decent reason, but once started, it is propagated as a fashion in dress is propagated; even those who do not like it read it because it is there, and because nothing else is easily to be found.

The same patronage of favoured forms, and persecution of disliked forms, are the main causes too, I believe, which change national character. Some one attractive type catches the eye, so to speak, of the nation, or a part of the nation, as servants catch the gait of their masters, or as mobile girls come home speaking the special words and acting the little gestures of each family whom they may have been visiting. I do not know if many of my readers happen to have read Father Newman's celebrated sermon, "Personal Influence the Means of Propagating the Truth"; if not, I strongly recommend them to do so.

They will there see the opinion of a great practical leader of men, of one who has led very many where they little thought of going, as to the mode in which they are to be led; and what he says, put shortly and simply, and taken out of his delicate language, is but this—that men are guided by *type*, not by argument; that some winning instance must be set up before them, or the sermon will be vain, and the doctrine will not spread. I do not want to illustrate this matter from religious history, for I should be led far from my purpose, and after all I can but teach the commonplace that it is the life of teachers which is *catching*, not their tenets. And again, in political matters, how quickly a leading statesman can change the tone of the community! We are most of us earnest with Mr. Gladstone; we were most of us *not* so earnest in the time of Lord Palmerston. The change is what every one feels, though no one can define it. Each predominant mind calls out a corresponding sentiment in the country: most feel it a little. Those who feel it much express it much; those who feel it excessively express it excessively; those who dissent are silent or unheard.

After such great matters as religion and politics, it may seem trifling to illustrate the subject from little boys. But it is not trifling. The bane of philosophy is pomposity: people will not see that small things are the miniatures of greater, and it seems a loss of abstract dignity to freshen their minds by object lessons from what they know. But every boarding-school changes as a nation changes. Most of us may remember thinking, "How odd it is that this 'half' should be so unlike last 'half': now we never go out of bounds, last half we were always going: now we play rounders, then we played prisoner's base"; and so through all the easy life of that time. In fact, some ruling spirits, some one or two ascendant boys, had left, one or two others had come; and so all was changed. The models were changed, and the copies changed; a different thing was praised, and a different thing bullied. A curious case of the same tendency was noticed to me only lately. A friend of mine—a Liberal Conservative—addressed a meeting of working men at Leeds, and was much pleased at finding

his characteristic, and perhaps refined points, both apprehended and applauded. "But then," as he narrated, "up rose a blatant Radical who said the very opposite things, and the working men cheered him too, and quite equally." He was puzzled to account for so rapid a change. But the mass of the meeting was no doubt nearly neutral, and, if set going, quite ready to applaud any good words without much thinking. The ringleaders changed. The radical tailor started the radical cheer: the more moderate shoemaker started the moderate cheer; and the great bulk followed suit. Only a few in each case were silent, and an absolute contrast was in ten minutes presented by the same elements.

The truth is that the propensity of man to imitate what is before him is one of the strongest parts of his nature. And one sign of it is the great pain which we feel when our imitation has been unsuccessful. There is a cynical doctrine that most men would rather be accused of wickedness than of *gaucherie*. And this is but another way of saying that the bad copying of predominant manners is felt to be more of a disgrace than common consideration would account for its being, since *gaucherie* in all but extravagant cases is not an offence against religion or morals, but is simply bad imitation.

We must not think that this imitation is voluntary, or even conscious. On the contrary, it has its seat mainly in very obscure parts of the mind, whose notions, so far from having been consciously produced, are hardly felt to exist; so far from being conceived beforehand, are not even felt at the time. The main seat of the imitative part of our nature is our belief, and the causes predisposing us to believe this, or disinclining us to believe that, are among the obscurest parts of our nature. But as to the imitative nature of credulity there can be no doubt. In *Eothen* there is a capital description of how every sort of European resident in the East, even the shrewd merchant and "the post-captain," with his bright, wakeful eyes of commerce, comes soon to believe in witchcraft, and to assure you, in confidence, that there "really is something in it". He has never seen anything convincing

himself, but he has seen those who have seen those who have seen those who have seen. In fact, he has lived in an atmosphere of infectious belief, and he has inhaled it. Scarcely any one can help yielding to the current infatuations of his sect or party. For a short time—say some fortnight—he is resolute; he argues and objects; but, day by day, the poison thrives, and reason wanes. What he hears from his friends, what he reads in the party organ, produces its effect. The plain, palpable conclusion which every one around him believes, has an influence yet greater and more subtle; that conclusion seems so solid and unmistakable; his own good arguments get daily more and more like a dream. Soon the gravest sage shares the folly of the party with which he acts, and the sect with which he worships.

In true metaphysics I believe that, contrary to common opinion, unbelief far oftener needs a reason and requires an effort than belief. Naturally, and if man were made according to the pattern of the logicians, he would say, "When I see a valid argument I will believe, and till I see such argument I will not believe". But, in fact, every idea vividly before us soon appears to us to be true, unless we keep up our perceptions of the arguments which prove it untrue, and voluntarily coerce our minds to remember its falsehood. "All clear ideas are true," was for ages a philosophical maxim, and though no maxim can be more unsound, none can be more exactly conformable to ordinary human nature. The child resolutely accepts every idea which passes through its brain as true; it has no distinct conception of an idea which is strong, bright, and permanent, but which is false too. The mere presentation of an idea, unless we are careful about it, or unless there is within some unusual resistance, makes us believe it; and this is why the belief of others adds to our belief so quickly, for no ideas seem so very clear as those inculcated on us from every side.

The grave part of mankind are quite as liable to these imitated beliefs as the frivolous part. The belief of the money market, which is mainly composed of grave people, is as imitative as any belief. You will find one day every one enter-

prising, enthusiastic, vigorous, eager to buy, and eager to order: in a week or so you will find almost the whole society depressed, anxious, and wanting to sell. If you examine the reasons for the activity, or for the inactivity, or for the change, you will hardly be able to trace them at all, and as far as you can trace them, they are of little force. In fact, these opinions were not formed by reason, but by mimicry. Something happened that looked a little good, on which eager sanguine men talked loudly, and common people caught their tone. A little while afterwards, and when people were tired of talking this, something also happened looking a little bad, on which the dismal, anxious people began, and all the rest followed their words. And in both cases an avowed dissentient is set down as "crotchety". "If you want," said Swift, "to gain the reputation of a sensible man, you should be of the opinion of the person with whom for the time being you are conversing." There is much quiet intellectual persecution among "reasonable" men; a cautious person hesitates before he tells them anything new, for if he gets a name for such things he will be called "flighty," and in times of decision he will not be attended to.

In this way the infection of imitation catches men in their most inward and intellectual part—their creed. But it also invades men—by the most bodily part of the mind—so to speak—the link between soul and body—the manner. No one needs to have this explained; we all know how a kind of subtle influence makes us imitate or try to imitate the manner of those around us. To conform to the fashion of Rome—whatever the fashion may be, and whatever Rome we may for the time be at—is among the most obvious needs of human nature. But what is not so obvious, though as certain, is that the influence of the imitation goes deep as well as extends wide. "The matter," as Wordsworth says, "of style very much comes out of the manner." If you will endeavour to write an imitation of the thoughts of Swift in a copy of the style of Addison, you will find that not only is it hard to write Addison's style, from its intrinsic excellence, but also that the more you approach to it the more you lose the thought of

Swift. The eager passion of the meaning beats upon the mild drapery of the words. So you could not express the plain thoughts of an Englishman in the grand manner of a Spaniard. Insensibly, and as by a sort of magic, the kind of manner which a man catches eats into him, and makes him in the end what at first he only seems.

This is the principal mode in which the greatest minds of an age produce their effect. They set the tone which others take, and the fashion which others use. There is an odd idea that those who take what is called a "scientific view" of history need rate lightly the influence of individual character. It would be as reasonable to say that those who take a scientific view of nature need think little of the influence of the sun. On the scientific view a great man is a great new cause (compounded or not out of other causes, for I do not here, or elsewhere in these papers, raise the question of freewill), but, anyhow, new in all its effects, and all its results. Great models for good and evil sometimes appear among men, who follow them either to improvement or degradation.

I am, I know, very long and tedious in setting out this; but I want to bring home to others what every new observation of society brings more and more freshly to myself—that this unconscious imitation and encouragement of appreciated character, and this equally unconscious shrinking from and persecution of disliked character, is the main force which moulds and fashions men in society as we now see it. Soon I shall try to show that the more acknowledged causes, such as change of climate, alteration of political institutions, progress of science, act principally through this cause; that they change the object of imitation and the object of avoidance, and so work their effect. But first I must speak of the origin of nations—of nation-making as one may call it—the proper subject of this paper.

The process of nation-making is one of which we have obvious examples in the most recent times, and which is going on now. The most simple example is the foundation of the first State of America, say New England, which has such a marked and such a deep national character. A great number

of persons agreeing in fundamental disposition, agreeing in religion, agreeing in politics, form a separate settlement; they exaggerate their own disposition, teach their own creed, set up their favourite government; they discourage all other dispositions, persecute other beliefs, forbid other forms or habits of government. Of course a nation so made will have a separate stamp and mark. The original settlers began of one type; they sedulously imitated it; and (though other causes have intervened and disturbed it) the necessary operation of the principles of inheritance has transmitted many original traits still unaltered, and has left an entire New England character—in no respect unaffected by its first character.

This case is well known, but it is not so that the same process, in a weaker shape, is going on in America now. Congeniality of sentiment is a reason of selection, and a bond of cohesion in the "West" at present. Competent observers say that townships grow up there by each place taking its own religion, its own manners, and its own ways. Those who have these morals and that religion go to that place, and stay there; and those who have not these morals and that religion either settle elsewhere at first, or soon pass on. The days of colonisation by sudden "swarms" of like creed is almost over, but a less visible process of attraction by similar faith over similar is still in vigour, and very likely to continue.

And in cases where this principle does not operate all new settlements, being formed of "emigrants," are sure to be composed of rather restless people, mainly. The stay-at-home people are not to be found there, and these are the quiet, easy people. A new settlement voluntarily formed (for of old times, when people were expelled by terror, I am not speaking) is sure to have in it much more than the ordinary proportion of active men, and much less than the ordinary proportion of inactive; and this accounts for a large part, though not perhaps all, of the difference between the English in England, and the English in Australia.

The causes which formed New England in recent times cannot be conceived as acting much upon mankind in their infancy. Society is not then formed upon a "voluntary

system" but upon an involuntary. A man in early ages is born to a certain obedience, and cannot extricate himself from an inherited government. Society then is made up, not of individuals, but of families; creeds then descend by inheritance in those families. Lord Melbourne once incurred the ridicule of philosophers by saying he should adhere to the English Church *because* it was the religion of his fathers. The philosophers, of course, said that a man's fathers' believing anything was no reason for his believing it unless it was true. But Lord Melbourne was only uttering out of season, and in a modern time, one of the most firm and accepted maxims of old times. A secession on religious grounds of isolated Romans to sail beyond sea would have seemed to the ancient Romans an impossibility. In still ruder ages the religion of savages is a thing too feeble to create a schism or to found a community. We are dealing with people capable of history when we speak of great ideas, not with prehistoric flint-men or the present savages. But though under very different forms, the same essential causes—the imitation of preferred characters and the elimination of detested characters—were at work in the oldest times, and are at work among rude men now. Strong as the propensity to imitation is among civilised men, we must conceive it as an impulse of which their minds have been partially denuded. Like the far-seeing sight, the infallible hearing, the magical scent of the savage, it is a half-lost power. It was strongest in ancient times, and *is* strongest in uncivilised regions.

This extreme propensity to imitation is one great reason of the amazing sameness which every observer notices in savage nations. When you have seen one Fuegian, you have seen all Fuegians—one Tasmanian, all Tasmanians. The higher savages, as the New Zealanders, are less uniform; they have more of the varied and compact structure of civilised nations, because in other respects they are more civilised. They have greater mental capacity—larger stores of inward thought. But much of the same monotonous nature clings to them too. A savage tribe resembles a herd of gregarious beasts; where the leader goes they go too; they copy blindly his habits, and

thus soon become that which he already is. For not only the tendency, but also the power to imitate, is stronger in savages than civilised men. Savages copy quicker, and they copy better. Children, in the same way, are born mimics; they cannot help imitating what comes before them. There is nothing in their minds to resist the propensity to copy. Every educated man has a large inward supply of ideas to which he can retire, and in which he can escape from or alleviate unpleasant outward objects. But a savage or a child has no resource. The external movements before it are its very life; it lives by what it sees and hears. Uneducated people in civilised nations have vestiges of the same condition. If you send a housemaid and a philosopher to a foreign country of which neither knows the language, the chances are that the housemaid will catch it before the philosopher. He has something else to do; he can live in his own thoughts. But unless she can imitate the utterances, she is lost; she has no life till she can join in the chatter of the kitchen. The propensity to mimicry, and the power of mimicry, are mostly strongest in those who have least abstract minds. The most wonderful examples of imitation in the world are perhaps the imitations of civilised men by savages in the use of martial weapons. They learn the *knack*, as sportsmen call it, with inconceivable rapidity. A North American Indian—an Australian even—can shoot as well as any white man. Here the motive is at its maximum, as well as the innate power. Every savage cares more for the power of killing than for any other power.

The persecuting tendency of all savages, and, indeed, of all ignorant people, is even more striking than their imitative tendency. No barbarian can bear to see one of his nation deviate from the old barbarous customs and usages of their tribe. Very commonly all the tribe would expect a punishment from the gods if any one of them refrained from what was old, or began what was new. In modern times and in cultivated countries we regard each person as responsible only for his own actions, and do not believe, or think of believing, that the misconduct of others can bring guilt on them. Guilt to us is an individual taint consequent on choice and cleaving

to the chooser. But in early ages the act of one member of the tribe is conceived to make all the tribe impious, to offend its peculiar god, to expose all the tribe to penalties from heaven. There is no "limited liability" in the political notions of that time. The early tribe or nation is a religious partnership, on which a rash member by a sudden impiety may bring utter ruin. If the state is conceived thus, toleration becomes wicked. A permitted deviation from the transmitted ordinances becomes simple folly. It is a sacrifice of the happiness of the greatest number. It is allowing one individual, for a moment's pleasure or a stupid whim, to bring terrible and irretrievable calamity upon all. No one will ever understand even Athenian history, who forgets this idea of the old world, though Athens was, in comparison with others, a rational and sceptical place, ready for new views, and free from old prejudices. When the street statues of Hermes were mutilated, all the Athenians were frightened and furious; they thought that they should *all* be ruined because some *one* had mutilated a god's image, and so offended him. Almost every detail of life in the classical times —the times when real history opens—was invested with a religious sanction; a sacred ritual regulated human action; whether it was called "law" or not, much of it was older than the word "law"; it was part of an ancient usage conceived as emanating from a superhuman authority, and not to be transgressed without risk of punishment by more than mortal power. There was such a *solidarité* then between citizens, that each might be led to persecute the other for fear of harm to himself.

It may be said that these two tendencies of the early world —that to persecution and that to imitation—must conflict; that the imitative impulse would lead men to copy what is new, and that persecution by traditional habit would prevent their copying it. But in practice the two tendencies co-operate. There is a strong tendency to copy the most common thing, and that common thing is the old habit. Daily imitation is far oftenest a conservative force, for the most frequent models are ancient. Of course, however, something new is necessary for every man and for every nation. We may wish, if we please, that to-morrow shall be like to-day, but it will not be like it. New

forces will impinge upon us; new wind, new rain, and the light of another sun; and we must alter to meet them. But the persecuting habit and the imitative combine to ensure that the new thing shall be in the old fashion; it must be an alteration, but it shall contain as little of variety as possible. The imitative impulse tends to this, because men most easily imitate what their minds are best prepared for,—what is like the old, yet with the inevitable minimum of alteration; what throws them least out of the old path, and puzzles least their minds. The doctrine of development means this,—that in unavoidable changes men like the new doctrine which is most of a "preservative addition" to their old doctrines. The imitative and the persecuting tendencies make all change in early nations a kind of selective conservatism, for the most part keeping what is old, but annexing some new but like practice—an additional turret in the old style.

It is this process of adding suitable things and rejecting discordant things which has raised those scenes of strange manners which in every part of the world puzzle the civilised men who come upon them first. Like the old head-dress of mountain villages, they make the traveller think not so much whether they are good or whether they are bad, as wonder how any one could have come to think of them; to regard them as "monstrosities," which only some wild abnormal intellect could have hit upon. And wild and abnormal indeed would be that intellect if it were a single one at all. But in fact such manners are the growth of ages, like Roman law or the British Constitution. No one man—no one generation—could have thought of them,—only a series of generations trained in the habits of the last and wanting something akin to such habits, could have devised them. Savages *pet* their favourite habits, so to say, and preserve them as they do their favourite animals; ages are required, but at last a national character is formed by the confluence of congenial attractions and accordant detestations.

Another cause helps. In early states of civilisation there is a great mortality of infant life, and this is a kind of selection in itself—the child most fit to be a good Spartan is most likely

to survive a Spartan childhood. The habits of the tribe are enforced on the child; if he is able to catch and copy them he lives; if he cannot he dies. The imitation which assimilates early nations continues through life, but it begins with suitable forms and acts on picked specimens. I suppose, too, that there is a kind of parental selection operating in the same way and probably tending to keep alive the same individuals. Those children which gratified their fathers and mothers most would be most tenderly treated by them, and have the best chance to live, and as a rough rule their favourites would be the children of most "promise," that is to say, those who seemed most likely to be a credit to the tribe according to the leading tribal manners and the existing tribal tastes. The most gratifying child would be the best looked after, and the most gratifying would be the best specimen of the standard then and there raised up.

Even so, I think there will be a disinclination to attribute so marked, fixed, almost physical a thing as national character to causes so evanescent as the imitation of appreciated habit and the persecution of detested habit. But, after all, national character is but a name for a collection of habits more or less universal. And this imitation and this persecution in long generations have vast physical effects. The mind of the parent (as we speak) passes somehow to the body of the child. The transmitted "something" is more affected by habits than it is by anything else. In time an ingrained type is sure to be formed, and sure to be passed on if only the causes I have specified be fully in action and without impediment.

As I have said, I am not explaining the origin of races, but of nations, or, if you like, of tribes. I fully admit that no imitation of predominant manner, or prohibitions of detested manners, will of themselves account for the broadest contrasts of human nature. Such means would no more make a Negro out of a Brahmin, or a Red-man out of an Englishman, than washing would change the spots of a leopard or the colour of an Ethiopian. Some more potent causes must co-operate, or we should not have these enormous diversities. The minor causes I deal with made Greek to differ from Greek, but they did not

make the Greek race. We cannot precisely mark the limit, but a limit there clearly is.

If we look at the earliest monuments of the human race, we find these race-characters as decided as the race-characters now. The earliest paintings or sculptures we anywhere have, give us the present contrasts of dissimilar types as strongly as present observation. Within historical memory no such differences have been created as those between Negro and Greek, between Papuan and Red Indian, between Esquimaux and Goth. We start with cardinal diversities; we trace only minor modifications, and we only see minor modifications. And it is very hard to see how any number of such modifications could change man as he is in one race-type to man as he is in some other. Of this there are but two explanations; *one*, that these great types were originally separate creations, as they stand—that the Negro was made so, and the Greek made so. But this easy hypothesis of special creation has been tried so often, and has broken down so very often, that in no case, probably, do any great number of careful inquirers very firmly believe it. They may accept it provisionally, as the best hypothesis at present, but they feel about it as they cannot help feeling as to an army which has always been beaten; however strong it seems, they think it will be beaten again. What the other explanation is exactly I cannot pretend to say. Possibly as yet the data for a confident opinion are not before us. But by far the most plausible suggestion is that of Mr. Wallace, that these race-marks are living records of a time when the intellect of man was not as able as it is now to adapt his life and habits to change of region; that consequently early mortality in the first wanderers was beyond conception great; that only those (so to say) haphazard individuals throve who were born with a protected nature—that is, a nature suited to the climate and the country, fitted to use its advantages, shielded from its natural diseases. According to Mr. Wallace, the Negro is the remnant of the one variety of man who without more adaptiveness than then existed could live in Interior Africa. Immigrants died off till

they produced him or something like him, and so of the Esquimaux or the American.

Any protective habit also struck out in such a time would have a far greater effect than it could afterwards. A gregarious tribe, whose leader was in some imitable respects adapted to the struggle for life, and which copied its leader, would have an enormous advantage in the struggle for life. It would be sure to win and live, for it would be coherent and adapted, whereas, in comparison, competing tribes would be incoherent and unadapted. And I suppose that in early times, when those bodies did not already contain the records and the traces of endless generations, any new habit would more easily fix its mark on the heritable element, and would be transmitted more easily and more certainly. In such an age, man being softer and more pliable, deeper race-marks would be more easily inscribed and would be more likely to continue legible.

But I have no pretence to speak on such matters; this paper, as I have so often explained, deals with nation-making and not with race-making. I assume a world of marked varieties of man, and only want to show how less marked contrasts would probably and naturally arise in each. Given large homogeneous populations, some Negro, some Mongolian, some Aryan, I have tried to prove how small contrasting groups would certainly spring up within each—some to last and some to perish. These are the eddies in each race-stream which vary its surface, and are sure to last till some new force changes the current. These minor varieties, too, would be infinitely compounded, not only with those of the same race, but with those of others. Since the beginning of man, stream has been a thousand times poured into stream—quick into sluggish, dark into pale—and eddies and waters have taken new shapes and new colours, affected by what went before, but not resembling it. And then on the fresh mass, the old forces of composition and elimination again begin to act, and create over the new surface another world. "Motley was the wear" of the world when Herodotus first looked on it and described it to us, and thus, as it seems to me, were its varying colours produced.

If it be thought that I have made out that these forces of imitation and elimination be the main ones, or even at all powerful ones, in the formation of national character, it will follow that the effect of ordinary agencies upon that character will be more easy to understand than it often seems and is put down in books. We get a notion that a change of government or a change of climate acts equally on the mass of a nation, and so are we puzzled—at least, I have been puzzled —to conceive how it acts. But such changes do not at first act equally on all people in the nation. On many, for a very long time, they do not act at all. But they bring out new qualities, and advertise the effects of new habits. A change of climate, say from a depressing to an invigorating one, so acts. Everybody feels it a little, but the most active feel it exceedingly. They labour and prosper, and their prosperity invites imitation. Just so with the contrary change, from an animating to a relaxing place,—the naturally lazy look so happy as they do nothing, that the naturally active are corrupted. The effect of any considerable change on a nation is thus an intensifying and accumulating effect. With its maximum power it acts on some prepared and congenial individuals; in them it is seen to produce attractive results, and then the habits creating those results are copied far and wide. And, as I believe, it is in this simple but not quite obvious way, that the process of progess and of degradation may generally be seen to run.

No. IV.

NATION-MAKING.

All theories as to the primitive man must be very uncertain. Granting the doctrine of evolution to be true, man must be held to have a common ancestor with the rest of the *Primates*. But then we do not know what their common ancestor was like. If ever we are to have a distinct conception of him, it can only be after long years of future researches and the laborious accumulation of materials, scarcely the beginning of which now exists. But science has already done something for us.

It cannot yet tell us our first ancestor, but it can tell us much of an ancestor very high up in the line of descent. We cannot get the least idea (even upon the full assumption of the theory of evolution) of the first man; but we can get a very tolerable idea of the paulo-prehistoric man, if I may so say—of man as he existed some short time (as we now reckon shortness), some ten thousand years, before history began. Investigators whose acuteness and diligence can hardly be surpassed—Sir John Lubbock and Mr. Tylor are the chiefs among them—have collected so much and explained so much that they have left a fairly vivid result.

That result is, or seems to me to be, if I may sum it up in my own words, that the modern prehistoric men—those of whom we have collected so many remains, and to whom are due the ancient, strange customs of historical nations (the fossil customs, we might call them, for very often they are stuck by themselves in real civilisation, and have no more part in it than the fossils in the surrounding strata)—prehistoric men in this sense were "savages without the fixed habits of savages"; that is, that, like savages, they had strong passions and weak reason; that, like savages, they preferred short spasms of greedy pleasure to mild and equable enjoyment; that, like savages, they could not postpone the present to the future; that, like savages, their ingrained sense of morality was, to say the best of it, rudimentary and defective. But that, unlike present savages, they had not complex customs and singular customs, odd and seemingly inexplicable rules guiding all human life. And the reasons for these conclusions as to a race too ancient to leave a history, but not too ancient to have left memorials, are briefly these: First, that we cannot imagine a strong reason without attainments; and, plainly, prehistoric men had not attainments. They would never have lost them if they had. It is utterly incredible that whole races of men in the most distant parts of the world (capable of counting, for they quickly learn to count) should have lost the art of counting, if they had ever possessed it. It is incredible that whole races could lose the elements of common sense, the elementary knowledge as to things material and things mental—the Ben-

jamin Franklin philosophy—if they had ever known it. Without some data the reasoning faculties of man cannot work. As Lord Bacon said, the mind of man must "work upon stuff". And in the absence of the common knowledge which trains us in the elements of reason as far as we are trained, they had no "stuff". Even, therefore, if their passions were not absolutely stronger than ours, relatively they were stronger, for their reason was weaker than our reason. Again, it is certain that races of men capable of postponing the present to the future (even if such races were conceivable without an educated reason) would have had so huge an advantage in the struggles of nations, that no others would have survived them. A single Australian tribe (really capable of such a habit, and really practising it) would have conquered all Australia almost as the English have conquered it. Suppose a race of long-headed Scotchmen, even as ignorant as the Australians, and they would have got from Torres to Bass's Straits, no matter how fierce was the resistance of the other Australians. The whole territory would have been theirs, and theirs only. We cannot imagine innumerable races to have lost, if they had once had it, the most useful of all habits of mind—the habit which would most ensure their victory in the incessant contests which, ever since they began, men have carried on with one another and with nature, the habit, which in historical times has above any other received for its possession the victory in those contests. Thirdly, we may be sure that the morality of prehistoric man was as imperfect and as rudimentary as his reason. The same sort of arguments apply to a self-restraining morality of a high type as apply to a settled postponement of the present to the future upon grounds recommended by argument. Both are so involved in difficult intellectual ideas (and a high morality the most of the two) that it is all but impossible to conceive their existence among people who could not count more than five—who had only the grossest and simplest forms of language—who had no kind of writing or reading—who, as it has been roughly said, had "no pots and no pans" —who could indeed make a fire, but who could hardly do anything else—who could hardly command nature any further. Exactly also like a

shrewd far-sightedness, a sound morality on elementary transactions is far too useful a gift to the human race ever to have been thoroughly lost when they had once attained it. But innumerable savages have lost all but completely many of the moral rules most conducive to tribal welfare. There are many savages who can hardly be said to care for human life—who have scarcely the family feelings—who are eager to kill all old people (their own parents included) as soon as they get old and become a burden—who have scarcely the sense of truth—who, probably from a constant tradition of terror, wish to conceal everything, and would (as observers say) "rather lie than not"—whose ideas of marriage are so vague and slight that the idea, "communal marriage" (in which all the women of the tribe are common to all the men, and them only), has been invented to denote it. Now if we consider how cohesive and how fortifying to human societies are the love of truth, and the love of parents, and a stable marriage tie, how sure such feelings would be to make a tribe which possessed them wholly and soon victorious over tribes which were destitute of them, we shall begin to comprehend how unlikely it is that vast masses of tribes throughout the world should have lost all these moral helps to conquest, not to speak of others. If any reasoning is safe as to prehistoric man, the reasoning which imputes to him a deficient sense of morals is safe, for all the arguments suggested by all our late researches converge upon it, and concur in teaching it.

Nor on this point does the case rest wholly on recent investigations. Many years ago Mr. Jowett said that the classical religions bore relics of the "ages before morality". And this is only one of several cases in which that great thinker has proved by a chance expression that he had exhausted impending controversies years before they arrived, and had perceived more or less the conclusion at which the disputants would arrive long before the public issue was joined. There is no other explanation of such religions than this. We have but to open Mr. Gladstone's "Homer" in order to see with how intense an antipathy a really moral age would regard the gods and goddesses of Homer; how inconceivable it is that a really moral

age should first have invented and then bowed down before them; how plain it is (when once explained) that they are antiquities, like an English court-suit, or a *stone*-sacrificial knife, for no one would use such things as implements of ceremony, except those who had inherited them from a past age, when there was nothing better.

Nor is there anything inconsistent with our present moral theories of whatever kind in so thinking about our ancestors. The intuitive theory of morality, which would be that naturally most opposed to it, has lately taken a new development. It is not now maintained that all men have the same amount of conscience. Indeed, only a most shallow disputant who did not understand even the plainest facts of human nature could ever have maintained it; if men differ in anything they differ in the fineness and the delicacy of their moral intuitions, however we may suppose those feelings to have been acquired. We need not go as far as savages to learn that lesson; we need only talk to the English poor or to our own servants, and we shall be taught it very completely. The lower classes in civilised countries, like all classes in uncivilised countries, are clearly wanting in the nicer part of those feelings which, taken together, we call the *sense* of morality. All this an intuitionist who knows his case will now admit, but he will add that, though the amount of the moral sense may and does differ in different persons, yet that as far as it goes it is alike in all. He likens it to the intuition of number, in which some savages are so defective that they cannot really and easily count more than three. Yet as far as three his intuitions are the same as those of civilised people. Unquestionably if there are intuitions at all, the primary truths of number are such. There is a felt necessity in them if in anything, and it would be pedantry to say that any proposition of morals was *more* certain than that five and five make ten. The truths of arithmetic, intuitive or not, certainly cannot be acquired independently of experience nor can those of morals be so either. Unquestionably they were aroused in life and by experience, though after that comes the difficult and ancient controversy whether anything peculiar to them and not to be found in the other facts of life

is superadded to them independently of experience out of the vigour of the mind itself. No intuitionist, therefore, fears to speak of the conscience of his prehistoric ancestor as imperfect, rudimentary, or hardly to be discerned, for he has to admit much the same so as to square his theory to plain modern facts, and that theory in the modern form may consistently be held along with them. Of course if an intuitionist can accept this conclusion as to prehistoric men, so assuredly may Mr. Spencer, who traces all morality back to our inherited experience of utility, or Mr. Darwin, who ascribes it to an inherited sympathy, or Mr. Mill, who with characteristic courage undertakes to build up the whole moral nature of man with no help whatever either from ethical intuition or from physiological instinct. Indeed of the everlasting questions, such as the reality of freewill, or the nature of conscience, it is, as I have before explained, altogether inconsistent with the design of these papers to speak. They have been discussed ever since the history of discussion begins; human opinion is still divided, and most people still feel many difficulties in every suggested theory, and doubt if they have heard the last word of argument or the whole solution of the problem in any of them. In the interest of sound knowledge it is essential to narrow to the utmost the debatable territory; to see how many ascertained facts there are which are consistent with all theories, how many may, as foreign lawyers would phrase it, be equally held in *condominium* by them.

But though in these great characteristics there is reason to imagine that the prehistoric man—at least the sort of prehistoric man I am treating of, the man some few thousand years before history began, and not at all, at least not necessarily, the primitive man—was identical with a modern savage, in another respect there is equal or greater reason to suppose that he was most unlike a modern savage. A modern savage is anything but the simple being which philosophers of the eighteenth century imagined him to be; on the contrary, his life is twisted into a thousand curious habits; his reason is darkened by a thousand strange prejudices; his feelings are frightened by a thousand cruel superstitions. The whole

mind of a modern savage is, so to say, *tattooed* over with monstrous images; there is not a smooth place anywhere about it. But there is no reason to suppose the minds of prehistoric men to be so cut and marked; on the contrary, the creation of these habits, these superstitions, these prejudices, must have taken ages. In his nature, it may be said, prehistoric man was the same as a modern savage; it is only in his acquisition that he was different.

It may be objected that if man was developed out of any kind of animal (and this is the doctrine of evolution which, if it be not proved conclusively, has great probability and great scientific analogy in its favour) he would necessarily at first possess animal instincts; that these would only gradually be lost; that in the meantime they would serve as a protection and an aid, and that prehistoric men, therefore, would have important helps and feelings which existing savages have not. And probably of the first men, the first beings worthy to be so called, this was true: they had, or may have had, certain remnants of instincts which aided them in the struggle of existence, and as reason gradually came these instincts may have waned away. Some instincts certainly do wane when the intellect is applied steadily to their subject-matter. The curious "counting boys," the arithmetical prodigies, who can work by a strange innate faculty the most wonderful sums, lose that faculty, always partially, sometimes completely, if they are taught to reckon by rule like the rest of mankind. In like manner I have heard it said that a man could soon reason himself out of the instinct of decency if he would only take pains and work hard enough. And perhaps other primitive instincts may have in like manner passed away. But this does not affect my argument. I am only saying that these instincts, if they ever existed, *did* pass away—that there was a period, probably an immense period as we reckon time in human history, when prehistoric men lived much as savages live now, without any important aids and helps.

The proofs of this are to be found in the great works of Sir John Lubbock and Mr. Tylor, of which I just now spoke. I can only bring out two of them here. First, it is plain that

the first prehistoric men had the flint tools which the lowest savages use, and we can trace a regular improvement in the finish and in the efficiency of their simple instruments corresponding to that which we see at this day in the upward transition from the lowest savages to the highest. Now it is not conceivable that a race of beings with valuable instincts supporting their existence and supplying their wants would need these simple tools. They are exactly those needed by very poor people who have no instincts, and those were used by such, for savages are the poorest of the poor. It would be very strange if these same utensils, no more no less, were used by beings whose discerning instincts made them in comparison altogether rich. Such a being would know how to manage without such things, or if it wanted any, would know how to make better.

And, secondly, on the moral side we know that the prehistoric age was one of much licence, and the proof is that in that age descent was reckoned through the female only, just as it is among the lowest savages. "Maternity," it has been said, "is a matter of fact, paternity is a matter of opinion"; and this not very refined expression exactly conveys the connection of the lower human societies. In all slave-owning communities —in Rome formerly, and in Virginia yesterday—such was the accepted rule of law; the child kept the condition of the mother, whatever that condition was; nobody inquired as to the father; the law, once for all, assumed that he could not be ascertained. Of course no remains exist which prove this or anything else about the morality of prehistoric man; and morality can only be described by remains amounting to a history. But one of the axioms of prehistoric investigation binds us to accept this as the morality of the prehistoric races if we receive that axiom. It is plain that the widespread absence of a characteristic which greatly aids the possessor in the conflicts between race and race probably indicates that the primary race did not possess that quality. If one-armed people existed almost everywhere in every continent; if people were found in every intermediate stage, some with the mere germ of the second arm, some with the second arm half-grown, some with it nearly complete; we

should then argue—"the first race cannot have had two arms, because men have always been fighting, and as two arms are a great advantage in fighting, one-armed and half-armed people would immediately have been killed off the earth; they never could have attained any numbers. A diffused deficiency in a warlike power is the best attainable evidence that the prehistoric men did not possess that power." If this axiom be received it is palpably applicable to the marriage-bond of primitive races. A cohesive "family" is the best germ for a campaigning nation. In a Roman family the boys, from the time of their birth, were bred to a domestic despotism, which well prepared them for a subjection in after life to a military discipline, a military drill, and a military despotism. They were ready to obey their generals because they were compelled to obey their fathers; they conquered the world in manhood because as children they were bred in homes where the tradition of passionate valour was steadied by the habit of implacable order. And nothing of this is possible in loosely-bound family groups (if they can be called families at all) where the father is more or less uncertain, where descent is not traced through him, where, that is, property does not come from him, where such property as he has passes to his *sure* relations—to his sister's children. An ill-knit nation which does not recognise paternity as a legal relation, would be conquered like a mob by any other nation which had a vestige or a beginning of the *patria potestas*. If, therefore, all the first men had the strict morality of families, they would no more have permitted the rise of *semi*-moral nations anywhere in the world than the Romans would have permitted them to arise in Italy. They would have conquered, killed, and plundered them before they became nations; and yet semi-moral nations exist all over the world.

It will be said that this argument proves too much. For it proves that not only the somewhat-before-history men, but the absolutely first men, could not have had close family instincts, and yet if they were like most though not all of the animals nearest to man they had such instincts. There is a great story of some African chief who expressed his disgust at adhering to one wife, by saying it was "like the monkeys".

The semi-brutal ancestors of man, if they existed, had very likely an instinct of constancy which the African chief, and others like him, had lost. How, then, if it was so beneficial, could they ever lose it? The answer is plain: they could lose it if they had it as an irrational propensity and habit, and not as a moral and rational feeling. When reason came, it would weaken that habit like all other irrational habits. And reason is a force of such infinite vigour—a victory-making agent of such incomparable efficiency—that its continually diminishing valuable instincts will not matter if it grows itself steadily all the while. The strongest competitor wins in both the cases we are imagining; in the first, a race with intelligent reason, but without blind instinct, beats a race with that instinct but without that reason; in the second, a race with reason and high moral feeling beats a race with reason but without high moral feeling. And the two are palpably consistent.

There is every reason, therefore, to suppose prehistoric man to be deficient in much of sexual morality, as we regard that morality. As to the detail of "primitive marriage" or "*no* marriage," for that is pretty much what it comes to, there is of course much room for discussion. Both Mr. M'Clennan and Sir John Lubbock are too accomplished reasoners and too careful investigators to wish conclusions so complex and refined as theirs to be accepted all in a mass, besides that on some critical points the two differ. But the main issue is not dependent on nice arguments. Upon broad grounds we may believe that in prehistoric times men fought both to gain and to keep their wives; that the strongest man took the best wife away from the weaker man; and that if the wife was restive, did not like the change, her new husband beat her; that (as in Australia now) a pretty woman was sure to undergo many such changes, and her back to bear the marks of many such chastisements; that in the principal department of human conduct (which is the most tangible and easily traced, and therefore the most obtainable specimen of the rest) the minds of prehistoric men were not so much immoral as *un*moral: they did not violate a rule of conscience, but they were somehow

not sufficiently developed for them to feel on this point any conscience, or for it to prescribe to them any rule.

The same argument applies to religion. There are, indeed, many points of the greatest obscurity, both in the present savage religions and in the scanty vestiges of prehistoric religion. But one point is clear. All savage religions are full of superstitions founded on luck. Savages believe that casual omens are a sign of coming events; that some trees are lucky, that some animals are lucky, that some places are lucky, that some indifferent actions—indifferent apparently and indifferent really—are lucky, and so of others in each class, that they are unlucky. Nor can a savage well distinguish between a sign of "luck" or ill-luck, as we should say, and a deity which causes the good or the ill; the indicating precedent and the causing being are to the savage mind much the same; a steadiness of head far beyond savages is required consistently to distinguish them. And it is extremely natural that they should believe so. They are playing a game—the game of life—with no knowledge of its rules. They have not an idea of the laws of nature; if they want to cure a man, they have no conception at all of true scientific remedies. If they try anything they must try it upon bare chance. The most useful modern remedies were often discovered in this bare, empirical way. What could be more improbable—at least, for what could a prehistoric man have less given a good reason—than that some mineral springs should stop rheumatic pains, or mineral springs make wounds heal quickly? And yet the chance knowledge of the marvellous effect of gifted springs is probably as ancient as any sound knowledge as to medicine whatever. No doubt it was mere casual luck at first that tried these springs and found them answer. Somebody by accident tried them and by that accident was instantly cured. The chance which happily directed men in this one case, misdirected them in a thousand cases. Some expedition had answered when the resolution to undertake it was resolved on under an ancient tree, and accordingly that tree became lucky and sacred. Another expedition failed when a magpie crossed its path, and a magpie was said to be unlucky. A serpent crossed the path of another expedi-

tion, and it had a marvellous victory, and accordingly the serpent became a sign of great luck (and what a savage cannot distinguish from it—a potent deity which makes luck). Ancient medicine is equally unreasonable: as late down as the Middle Ages it was full of superstitions founded on mere luck. The collection of prescriptions published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls abounds in such fancies as we should call them. According to one of them, unless I forget, some disease —a fever, I think—is supposed to be cured by placing the patient between two halves of a hare and a pigeon recently killed.[1] Nothing can be plainer than that there is no ground for this kind of treatment, and that the idea of it arose out of a chance hit, which came right and succeeded. There was nothing so absurd or so contrary to common sense as we are apt to imagine about it. The lying between two halves of a hare or a pigeon was *à priori*, and to the inexperienced mind, quite as likely to cure disease as the drinking certain draughts of nasty mineral water. Both, somehow, were tried; both answered—that is, both were at the first time, or at some memorable time, followed by a remarkable recovery; and the only difference is, that the curative power of the mineral is persistent, and happens constantly; whereas, on an average of trials, the proximity of a hare or pigeon is found to have no effect, and cures take place as often in cases where it is not tried as in cases where it is. The nature of minds which are deeply engaged in watching events of which they do not know the reason, is to single out some fabulous accompaniment or some wonderful series of good luck or bad luck, and to dread ever after that accompaniment if it brings evil, and to love it and long for it if it brings good. All savages are in this position, and the fascinating effect of striking accompaniments (in some

[1] Readers of Scott's life will remember that an admirer of his in humble life proposed to cure him of inflammation of the bowels by making him sleep a whole night on twelve smooth stones, painfully collected by the admirer from twelve brooks, which was, it appeared, a *recipe* of sovereign traditional power. Scott gravely told the proposer that he had mistaken the charm, and that the stones were of no virtue unless wrapped up in the petticoat of a widow who never wished to marry again, and as no such widow seems to have been forthcoming, he escaped the remedy.

single case) of singular good fortune and singular calamity, is one great source of savage religions.

Gamblers to this day are, with respect to the chance part of their game, in much the same plight as savages with respect to the main events of their whole lives. And we well know how superstitious they all are. To this day very sensible whist-players have a certain belief—not, of course, a fixed conviction, but still a certain impression—that there is "luck under a black deuce," and will half mutter some not very gentle maledictions if they turn up as a trump the four of clubs, because it brings ill-luck, and is "the devil's bedpost". Of course grown-up gamblers have too much general knowledge, too much organised common sense, to prolong or cherish such ideas; they are ashamed of entertaining them, though, nevertheless, they cannot entirely drive them out of their minds. But child-gamblers—a number of little boys set to play loo—are just in the position of savages, for their fancy is still impressible, and they have not as yet been thoroughly subjected to the confuting experience of the real world; and child-gamblers have idolatries—at least I know that years ago a set of boy loo-players, of whom I was one, had considerable faith in a certain "pretty fish," which was larger and more nicely made than the other fish we had. We gave the best evidence of our belief in its power to "bring luck"; we fought for it (if our elders were out of the way); we offered to buy it, with many other fish from the envied holder, and I am sure I have often cried bitterly if the chance of the game took it away from me. Persons who stand up for the dignity of philosophy, if any such there still are, will say that I ought not to mention this, because it seems trivial; but the more modest spirit of modern thought plainly teaches, if it teaches anything, the cardinal value of occasional little facts. I do not hesitate to say that many learned and elaborate explanations of the totem—the "clan" deity—the beast or bird who, in some supernatural way, attends to the clan and watches over it—do not seem to me to be nearly as akin to the reality as it works and lives among the lower races as the "pretty fish" of my early boyhood. And very naturally so, for a grave

philosopher is separated from primitive thought by the whole length of human culture; but an impressible child is as near to, and its thoughts are as much like, that thought as anything can now be.

The worst of these superstitions is that they are easy to make and hard to destroy. A single run of luck has made the fortune of many a charm and many idols. I doubt if even a single run of luck be necessary. I am sure that if an elder boy said that "the pretty fish was lucky—of course it was," all the lesser boys would believe it, and in a week it would be an accepted idol. And I suspect the Nestor of a savage tribe—the aged repository of guiding experience—would have an equal power of creating superstitions. But if once created they are most difficult to eradicate. If any one said that the amulet was of certain efficacy—that it always acted whenever it was applied—it would of course be very easy to disprove; but no one ever said that the "pretty fish" always brought luck; it was only said that it did so on the whole, and that if you had it you were more likely to be lucky than if you were without it. But it requires a long table of statistics of the results of games to disprove this thoroughly; and by the time people can make tables they are already above such beliefs, and do not need to have them disproved. Nor in many cases where omens or amulets are used would such tables be easy to make, for the data could not be found; and a rash attempt to subdue the superstition by a striking instance may easily end in confirming it. Francis Newman, in the remarkable narrative of his experience as a missionary in Asia, gives a curious example of this. As he was setting out on a distant and somewhat hazardous expedition, his native servants tied round the neck of the mule a small bag supposed to be of preventive and mystic virtue. As the place was crowded and a whole townspeople looking on, Mr. Newman thought that he would take an opportunity of disproving the superstition. So he made a long speech of explanation in his best Arabic, and cut off the bag, to the horror of all about him. But as ill-fortune would have it, the mule had not got thirty yards up the street before she put her foot into a hole and broke her leg; upon which

all the natives were confirmed in their former faith in the power of the bag, and said, "You see now what happens to unbelievers".

Now the present point as to these superstitions is their military inexpediency. A nation which was moved by these superstitions as to luck would be at the mercy of a nation, in other respects equal, which was not subject to them. In historical times, as we know, the panic terror at eclipses has been the ruin of the armies which have felt it; or has made them delay to do something necessary, or rush to do something destructive. The necessity of consulting the auspices, while it was sincerely practised and before it became a trick for disguising foresight, was in classical history very dangerous. And much worse is it with savages, whose life is one of omens, who must always consult their sorcerers, who may be turned this way or that by some chance accident, who, if they were intellectually able to frame a consistent military policy—and some savages in war see farther than in anything else—are yet liable to be put out, distracted, confused, and turned aside in the carrying out of it, because some event, really innocuous but to their minds foreboding, arrests and frightens them. A religion full of omens is a military misfortune, and will bring a nation to destruction if set to fight with a nation at all equal otherwise, who had a religion without omens. Clearly then, if all early men unanimously, or even much the greater number of early men, had a religion *without* omens, no religion, or scarcely a religion, anywhere in the world could have come into existence *with* omens; the immense majority possessing the superior military advantage, the small minority destitute of it would have been crushed out and destroyed. But, on the contrary, all over the world religions with omens once existed, in most they still exist; all savages have them, and deep in the most ancient civilisations we find the plainest traces of them. Unquestionably therefore the prehistoric religion was like that of savages—*viz.*, in this that it largely consisted in the watching of omens and in the worship of lucky beasts and things, which are a sort of embodied and permanent omens.

It may indeed be objected—an analogous objection was taken as to the ascertained moral deficiencies of prehistoric mankind—that if this religion of omens was so pernicious and so likely to ruin a race, no race would ever have acquired it. But it is only likely to ruin a race contending with another race otherwise equal. The fancied discovery of these omens —not an extravagant thing in an early age, as I have tried to show, not a whit then to be distinguished as improbable from the discovery of healing herbs or springs which prehistoric men also did discover—the discovery of omens was an act of reason as far as it went. And if in reason the omen-finding race were superior to the races in conflict with them, the omen-finding race would win, and we may conjecture that omen-finding races were thus superior since they won and prevailed in every latitude and in every zone.

In all particulars therefore we would keep to our formula, and say that prehistoric man was substantially a savage like present savages, in morals, intellectual attainments, and in religion; but that he differed in this from our present savages, that he had not had time to ingrain his nature so deeply with bad habits, and to impress bad beliefs so unalterably on his mind as they have. They have had ages to fix the stain on themselves, but primitive man was younger and had no such time.

I have elaborated the evidence for this conclusion at what may seem needless and tedious length, but I have done so on account of its importance. If we accept it, and if we are sure of it, it will help us to many most important conclusions. Some of these I have dwelt upon in previous papers, but I will set them down again.

First, it will in part explain to us what the world was about, so to speak, before history. It was making, so to say, the intellectual *consistence*—the connected and coherent habits, the preference of equable to violent enjoyment, the abiding capacity to prefer, if required, the future to the present, the mental prerequisites without which civilisation could not begin to exist, and without which it would soon cease to exist even had it begun. The primitive man, like the present savage,

had not these prerequisites, but, unlike the present savage, he was capable of acquiring them and of being trained in them, for his nature was still soft and still impressible, and possibly, strange as it may seem to say, his outward circumstances were more favourable to an attainment of civilisation than those of our present savages. At any rate, the prehistoric times were spent in making men capable of writing a history, and having something to put in it when it is written, and we can see how it was done.

Two preliminary processes indeed there are which seem inscrutable. There was some strange preliminary process by which the main races of men were formed; they began to exist very early, and except by intermixture no new ones have been formed since. It was a process singularly active in early ages, and singularly quiescent in later ages. Such differences as exist between the Aryan, the Turanian, the negro, the red man, and the Australian, are differences greater altogether than any causes now active are capable of creating in present men, at least in any way explicable by us. And there is, therefore, a strong presumption that (as great authorities now hold) these differences were created before the nature of men, especially before the mind and the adaptive nature of men, had taken their existing constitution. And a second condition precedent of civilisation seems, at least to me, to have been equally inherited, if the doctrine of evolution be true, from some previous state or condition. I at least find it difficult to conceive of men, at all like the present men, unless existing in something like families, that is, in groups avowedly connected, at least on the mother's side, and probably always with a vestige of connection, more or less, on the father's side, and unless these groups were like many animals, gregarious, under a leader more or less fixed. It is almost beyond imagination how man, as we know man, could by any sort of process have gained this step in civilisation. And it is a great advantage, to say the least of it, in the evolution theory that it enables us to remit this difficulty to a pre-existing period in nature, where other instincts and powers than our present ones may perhaps have come into play, and where our imagination can hardly

travel. At any rate, for the present I may assume these two steps in human progress made, and these two conditions realised.

The rest of the way, if we grant these two conditions, is plainer. The first thing is the erection of what we may call a custom making power, that is, of an authority which can enforce a fixed rule of life, which, by means of that fixed rule, can in some degree create a calculable future, which can make it rational to postpone present violent but momentary pleasure for future continual pleasure, because it ensures, what else is not sure, that if the sacrifice of what is in hand be made, enjoyment of the contingent expected recompense will be received. Of course I am not saying that we shall find in early society any authority of which these shall be the motives. We must have travelled ages (unless all our evidence be wrong) from the first men before there was a comprehension of such motives. I only mean that the first thing in early society was an authority of whose action this shall be the result, little as it knew what it was doing, little as it would have cared if it had known.

The conscious end of early societies was not at all, or scarcely at all, the protection of life and property, as it was assumed to be by the eighteenth-century theory of government. Even in early historical ages—in the youth of the human race, not its childhood—such is not the nature of early states. Sir Henry Maine has taught us that the earliest subject of jurisprudence is not the separate property of the individual, but the common property of the family group; what we should call private property hardly then existed; or if it did, was so small as to be of no importance: it was like the things little children are now allowed to *call* their own, which they feel it very hard to have taken from them, but which they have no real right to hold and keep. Such is our earliest property-law, and our earliest life-law is that the lives of all members of the family group were at the mercy of the head of the group. As far as the individual goes, neither his goods nor his existence were protected at all. And this may teach us that something else was lacked in early societies besides what in our societies we now think of.

I do not think I put this too high when I say that a most important if not the most important object of early legislation was the enforcement of *lucky* rites. I do not like to say religious rites, because that would involve me in a great controversy as to the power, or even the existence, of early religions. But there is no savage tribe without a notion of luck; and perhaps there is hardly any which has not a conception of luck for the tribe as a tribe, of which each member has not some such a belief that his own action or the action of any other member of it—that he or the others doing anything which was unlucky or would bring a "curse"—might cause evil not only to himself, but to all the tribe as well. I have said so much about "luck" and about its naturalness before, that I ought to say nothing again. But I must add that the contagiousness of the idea of "luck" is remarkable. It does not at all, like the notion of desert, cleave to the doer. There are people to this day who would not permit in their house people to sit down thirteen to dinner. They do not expect any evil to themselves particularly for permitting it or sharing in it, but they cannot get out of their heads the idea that some one or more of the number will come to harm if the thing is done. This is what Mr. Tylor calls survival in culture. The faint belief in the corporate liability of these thirteen is the feeble relic and last dying representative of that great principle of corporate liability to good and ill fortune which has filled such an immense place in the world.

The traces of it are endless. You can hardly take up a book of travels in rude regions without finding "I wanted to do so and so. But I was not permitted, for the natives feared it might bring ill luck on the 'party,' or perhaps the tribe." Mr. Galton, for instance, could hardly feed his people. The Damaras, he says, have numberless superstitions about meat which are very troublesome. In the first place, each tribe, or rather family, is prohibited from eating cattle of certain colours, savages, "who come from the sun" eschewing sheep spotted in a particular way, which those "who come from the rain" have no objection to. "As," he says, "there are five or six eandas or descents, and I had men from most of them with me,

I could hardly kill a sheep that everybody would eat;" and he could not keep his meat, for it had to be given away because it was commanded by one superstition, nor buy milk, the staple food of those parts, because it was prohibited by another. And so on without end. Doing anything unlucky is in their idea what putting on something that attracts the electric fluid is in fact. You cannot be sure that harm will not be done, not only to the person in fault, but to those about him too. As in the Scriptural phrase, doing what is of evil omen is "like one that letteth out water". He cannot tell what are the consequences of his act, who will share them, or how they can be prevented.

In the earliest historical nations I need not say that the corporate liabilities of states is to a modern student their most curious feature. The belief is indeed raised far above the notion of mere "luck," because there is a distinct belief in gods or a god whom the act offends. But the indiscriminate character of the punishment still survives; not only the mutilator of the Hermæ, but all the Athenians—not only the violator of the rites of the *Bona dea*, but all the Romans—are liable to the curse engendered; and so all through ancient history. The strength of the corporate anxiety so created is known to every one. Not only was it greater than any anxiety about personal property, but it was immeasurably greater. Naturally, even reasonably we may say, it was greater. The dread of the powers of nature, or of the beings who rule those powers, is properly, upon grounds of reason, as much greater than any other dread as the might of the powers of nature is superior to that of any other powers. If a tribe or a nation have, by a contagious fancy, come to believe that the doing of any one thing by any number will be "unlucky," that is, will bring an intense and vast liability on them all, then that tribe and that nation will prevent the doing of that thing more than anything else. They will deal with the most cherished chief who even by chance should do it, as in a similar case the sailors dealt with Jonah.

I do not of course mean that this strange condition of mind as it seems to us was the sole source of early customs. On

the contrary, man might be described as a custom-making animal with more justice than by many of the short descriptions. In whatever way a man has done anything once, he has a tendency to do it again: if he has done it several times he has a great tendency so to do it, and what is more, he has a great tendency to make others do it also. He transmits his formed customs to his children by example and by teaching. This is true now of human nature, and will always be true, no doubt. But what is peculiar in early societies is that over most of these customs there grows sooner or later a semi-supernatural sanction. The whole community is possessed with the idea that if the primal usages of the tribe be broken, harm unspeakable will happen in ways you cannot think of, and from sources you cannot imagine. As people nowadays believe that "murder will out," and that great crime will bring even an earthly punishment, so in early times people believed that for any breach of sacred custom certain retribution would happen. To this day many semi-civilised races have great difficulty in regarding any arrangement as binding and conclusive unless they can also manage to look at it as an inherited usage. Sir H. Maine, in his last work, gives a most curious case. The English Government in India has in many cases made new and great works of irrigation, of which no ancient Indian Government ever thought; and it has generally left it to the native village community to say what share each man of the village should have in the water; and the village authorities have accordingly laid down a series of most minute rules about it. But the peculiarity is that in no case do these rules "purport to emanate from the personal authority of their author or authors, which rests on grounds of reason not on grounds of innocence and sanctity; nor do they assume to be dictated by a sense of equity; there is always, I am assured, a sort of fiction under which some customs as to the distribution of water are supposed to have emanated from a remote antiquity, although, in fact, no such artificial supply had ever been so much as thought of". So difficult does this ancient race —like, probably, in this respect so much of the ancient world— find it to imagine a rule which is obligatory, but not traditional.

The ready formation of custom-making groups in early society must have been greatly helped by the easy divisions of that society. Much of the world—all Europe, for example—was then covered by the primeval forest; men had only conquered, and as yet could only conquer, a few plots and corners from it. These narrow spaces were soon exhausted, and if numbers grew some of the new people must move. Accordingly, migrations were constant, and were necessary. And these migrations were not like those of modern times. There was no such feeling as binds even Americans who hate, or speak as if they hated, the present political England—nevertheless to "the old home". There was then no organised means of communication—no practical communication, we may say, between parted members of the same group; those who once went out from the parent society went out for ever; they left no abiding remembrance, and they kept no abiding regard. Even the language of the parent tribe and of the descended tribe would differ in a generation or two. There being no written literature and no spoken intercourse, the speech of both would vary (the speech of such communities is always varying), and would vary in different directions. One set of causes, events, and associations would act on one, and another set on another; sectional differences would soon arise, and, for speaking purposes, what philologists call a dialectical difference often amounts to real and total difference: no connected interchange of thought is possible any longer. Separate groups soon "set up house"; the early societies begin a new set of customs, acquire and keep a distinct and special "luck".

If it were not for this facility of new formations, one good or bad custom would long since have "corrupted" the world; but even this would not have been enough but for those continual wars, of which I have spoken at such length in the essay on "The Use of Conflict," that I need say nothing now. These are by their incessant fractures of old images, and by their constant infusion of new elements, the real regenerators of society. And whatever be the truth or falsehood of the general dislike to mixed and half-bred races, no such suspicion was probably applicable to the early mixtures of primitive society.

Supposing, as is likely, each great aboriginal race to have had its own quarter of the world (a quarter, as it would seem, corresponding to the special quarters in which plants and animals are divided), then the immense majority of the mixtures would be between men of different tribes but of the same stock, and this no one would object to, but every one would praise.

In general, too, the conquerors would be better than the conquered (most merits in early society are more or less military merits), but they would not be very much better, for the lowest steps in the ladder of civilisation are very steep, and the effort to mount them is slow and tedious. And this is probably the better if they are to produce a good and quick effect in civilising those they have conquered. The experience of the English in India shows—if it shows anything—that a highly civilised race may fail in producing a rapidly excellent effect on a less civilised race, because it is too good and too different. The two are not *en rapport* together; the merits of the one are not the merits prized by the other; the manner-language of the one is not the manner-language of the other. The higher being is not and cannot be a model for the lower; he could not mould himself on it if he would, and would not if he could. Consequently, the two races have long lived together, "near and yet far off," daily seeing one another and daily interchanging superficial thoughts, but in the depths of their mind separated by a whole era of civilisation, and so affecting one another only a little in comparison with what might have been hoped. But in early societies there were no such great differences, and the rather superior conqueror must have easily improved the rather inferior conquered.

It is in the interior of these customary groups that national characters are formed. As I wrote a whole essay on the manner of this before, I cannot speak of it now. By proscribing nonconformist members for generations, and cherishing and rewarding conformist members, nonconformists become fewer and fewer, and conformists more and more. Most men mostly imitate what they see, and catch the tone of what they hear, and so a settled type—a persistent character—is formed. Nor is the process wholly mental. I

cannot agree, though the greatest authorities say it, that no "unconscious selection" has been at work at the breed of man. If neither that nor conscious selection has been at work, how did there come to be these breeds, and such there are in the greatest numbers, though we call them nations? In societies tyrannically customary, uncongenial minds become first cowed, then melancholy, then out of health, and at last die. A Shelley in New England could hardly have lived, and a race of Shelleys would have been impossible. Mr. Galton wishes that breeds of men should be created by matching men with marked characteristics with women of like characteristics. But surely this is what nature has been doing time out of mind, and most in the rudest nations and hardest times. Nature disheartened in each generation the ill-fitted members of each customary group, so deprived them of their full vigour, or, if they were weakly, killed them. The Spartan character was formed because none but people with a Spartan make of mind could endure a Spartan existence. The early Roman character was so formed too. Perhaps all very marked national characters can be traced back to a time of rigid and pervading discipline. In modern times, when society is more tolerant, new national characters are neither so strong, so featurely, nor so uniform.

In this manner society was occupied in prehistoric times, —it is consistent with and explicable by our general principle as to savages, that society should for ages have been so occupied, strange as that conclusion is, and incredible as it would be, if we had not been taught by experience to believe strange things.

Secondly, this principle and this conception of prehistoric times explain to us the meaning and the origin of the oldest and strangest of social anomalies—an anomaly which is among the first things history tells us—the existence of *caste* nations. Nothing is at first sight stranger than the aspect of those communities where several nations seem to be bound up together —where each is governed by its own rule of law, where no one pays any deference to the rule of law of any of the others. But if our principles be true, these are just the nations most likely

to last, which would have a special advantage in early times, and would probably not only maintain themselves, but conquer and kill out others also. The characteristic necessity of early society as we have seen, is strict usage and binding coercive custom. But the obvious result and inevitable evil of that is monotony in society; no one can be much different from his fellows, or can cultivate his difference.

Such societies are necessarily weak from the want of variety in their elements. But a *caste* nation is various and composite; and has in a mode suited to early societies the constant co-operation of contrasted persons, which in a later age is one of the greatest triumphs of civilisation. In a primitive age the division between the warrior caste and the priestly caste is especially advantageous. Little popular and little deserving to be popular nowadays as are priestly hierarchies, most probably the beginnings of science were made in such, and were for ages transmitted in such. An intellectual class was in that age only possible when it was protected by a notion that whoever hurt them would certainly be punished by heaven. In this class apart discoveries were slowly made and some beginning of mental discipline was slowly matured. But such a community is necessarily unwarlike, and the superstition which protects priests from home murder will not aid them in conflict with the foreigner. Few nations mind killing their enemies' priests, and many priestly civilisations have perished without record before they well began. But such a civilisation will not perish if a warrior *caste* is tacked on to it and is bound to defend it. On the contrary, such a civilisation will be singularly likely to live. The head of the sage will help the arm of the soldier.

That a nation divided into *castes* must be a most difficult thing to found is plain. Probably it could only begin in a country several times conquered, and where the boundaries of each caste rudely coincided with the boundaries of certain sets of victors and vanquished. But, as we now see, when founded it is a likely nation to last. A party-coloured community of many tribes and many usages is more likely to get on, and help itself, than a nation of a single lineage and one mono-

tonous rule. I say "at first," because I apprehend that in this case, as in so many others in the puzzling history of progress, the very institutions which most aid at step number one are precisely those which most impede at step number two. The whole of a caste nation is more various than the whole of a non-caste nation, but each caste itself is more monotonous than anything is, or can be, in a non-caste nation. Gradually a habit of action and type of mind forces itself on each caste, and it is little likely to be rid of it, for all who enter it are taught in one way and trained to the same employment. Several non-caste nations have still continued to progress. But all caste nations have stopped early, though some have lasted long. Each colour in the singular composite of these tesselated societies has an indelible and invariable shade.

Thirdly, we see why so few nations have made rapid advance, and how many have become stationary. It is in the process of becoming a nation, and in order to become such, that they subjected themselves to the influence which has made them stationary. They could not become a real nation without binding themselves by a fixed law and usage, and it is the fixity of that law and usage which has kept them as they were ever since. I wrote a whole essay on this before, so I need say nothing now; and I only name it because it is one of the most important consequences of this view of society, if not indeed the most important.

Again, we can thus explain one of the most curious facts of the present world. "Manner," says a shrewd observer, who has seen much of existing life, "manner gets regularly worse as you go from the East to the West; it is best in Asia, not so good in Europe, and altogether bad in the western states of America." And the reason is this—an imposing manner is a dignified usage, which tends to preserve itself and also all other existing usages along with itself. It tends to induce the obedience of mankind. One of the cleverest novelists of the present day has a curious dissertation to settle why on the hunting-field, and in all collections of men, some men "snub and some men get snubbed"; and why society recognises in each case the ascendancy or the subordination as

if it was right. "It is not at all," Mr. Trollope fully explains, "rare ability which gains the supremacy; very often the ill-treated man is quite as clever as the man who ill-treats him. Nor does it absolutely depend on wealth; for, though great wealth is almost always a protection from social ignominy, and will always ensure a passive respect, it will not in a miscellaneous group of men of itself gain an active power to snub others. Schoolboys, in the same way," the novelist adds, "let some boys have dominion, and make other boys slaves." And he decides, no doubt truly, that in each case "something in the manner or gait" of the supreme boy or man has much to do with it. On this account in early society a dignified manner is of essential importance; it is, then, not only an auxiliary mode of acquiring respect, but a principal mode. The competing institutions which have now much superseded it, had not then begun. Ancient institutions or venerated laws did not then exist; and the habitual ascendancy of grave manner was a primary force in winning and calming mankind. To this day it is rare to find a savage chief without it; and almost always they greatly excel in it. Only last year a red Indian chief came from the prairies to see President Grant, and everybody declared that he had the best manners in Washington. The secretaries and heads of departments seemed vulgar to him; though, of course, intrinsically they were infinitely above him, for he was only "a plundering rascal". But an impressive manner had been a tradition in the societies in which he had lived, because it was of great value in those societies; and it is not a tradition in America, for nowhere is it less thought of, or of less use, than in a rough English colony; the essentials of civilisation there depend on far different influences.

And manner, being so useful and so important, usages and customs grow up to develop it. Asiatic society is full of such things, if it should not rather be said to be composed of them.

"From the spirit and decision of a public envoy upon ceremonies and forms," says Sir John Malcolm, "the Persians very generally form their opinion of the character of the country he represents. This fact I had read in books, and all I saw

convinced me of its truth. Fortunately the Elchee had resided at some of the principal courts of India, whose usages are very similar. He was, therefore, deeply versed in that important science denominated 'Kâida-e-nishest-oo-berkhâst' (or the art of sitting and rising), in which is included a knowledge of the forms and manners of good society, and particularly those of Asiatic kings and their courts.

"He was quite aware, on his first arrival in Persia, of the consequence of every step he took on such delicate points; he was, therefore, anxious to fight all his battles regarding ceremonies before he came near the footstool of royalty. We were consequently plagued, from the moment we landed at Ambusheher, till we reached Shiraz, with daily almost hourly drilling, that we might be perfect in our demeanour at all places, and under all circumstances. We were carefully instructed where to ride in a procession, where to stand or sit within-doors, when to rise from our seats, how far to advance to meet a visitor, and to what part of the tent or house we were to follow him when he departed, if he was of sufficient rank to make us stir a step.

"The regulations of our risings and standings, and movings and reseatings, were, however, of comparatively less importance than the time and manner of smoking our Kelliâns and taking our coffee. It is quite astonishing how much depends upon coffee and tobacco in Persia. Men are gratified or offended, according to the mode in which these favourite refreshments are offered. You welcome a visitor, or send him off, by the way in which you call for a pipe or a cup of coffee. Then you mark, in the most minute manner, every shade of attention and consideration, by the mode in which he is treated. If he be above you, you present these refreshments yourself, and do not partake till commanded; if equal, you exchange pipes, and present him with coffee, taking the next cup yourself; if a little below you, and you wish to pay him attention, you leave him to smoke his own pipe, but the servant gives him, according to your condescending nod, the first cup of coffee; if much inferior, you keep your distance and maintain your rank, by taking the first cup of coffee yourself,

and then directing the servant, by a wave of the hand to help the guest.

"When a visitor arrives, the coffee and pipe are called for to welcome him; a second call for these articles announces that he may depart; but this part of the ceremony varies according to the relative rank or intimacy of the parties.

"These matters may appear light to those with whom observances of this character are habits, not rules; but in this country they are of primary consideration, a man's importance with himself and with others depending on them."

In ancient customary societies the influence of manner, which is a primary influence, has been settled into rules, so that it may aid established usages and not thwart them—that it may, above all, augment the *habit* of going by custom, and not break and weaken it. Every aid, as we have seen, was wanted to impose the yoke of custom upon such societies; and impressing the power of manner to serve them was one of the greatest aids.

And lastly, we now understand why order and civilisation are so unstable even in progressive communities. We see frequently in states what physiologists call "Atavism"—the return, in part, to the unstable nature of their barbarous ancestors.

Such scenes of cruelty and horror as happened in the great French Revolution, and as happen, more or less, in every great riot, have always been said to bring out a secret and suppressed side of human nature; and we now see that they were the outbreak of inherited passions long repressed by fixed custom, but starting into life as soon as that repression was catastrophically removed, and when sudden choice was given. The irritability of mankind, too, is only part of their imperfect, transitory civilisation and of their original savage nature. They could not look steadily to a given end for an hour in their prehistoric state; and even now, when excited or when suddenly and wholly thrown out of their old grooves, they can scarcely do so. Even some very high races, as the French and the Irish, seem in troubled times hardly to be stable at all, but to be carried everywhere as the passions of the moment and the ideas generated at the hour may determine. But, thoroughly to deal with such phenomena as these, we must examine the mode in

which national characters can be emancipated from the rule of custom, and can be prepared for the use of choice.

No. V.

THE AGE OF DISCUSSION

I.

The greatest living contrast is between the old Eastern and customary civilisations and the new Western and changeable civilisations. A year or two ago an inquiry was made of our most intelligent officers in the East, not as to whether the English Government were really doing good in the East, but as to whether the natives of India themselves thought we were doing good; to which in a majority of cases, the officers who were the best authority, answered thus: "No doubt you are giving the Indians many great benefits: you give them continued peace, Free Trade, the right to live as they like, subject to the laws; in these points and others they are far better off than they ever were; but still they cannot make you out. What puzzles them is your constant disposition to change, or as you call it, improvement. Their own life in every detail being regulated by ancient usage, they cannot comprehend a policy which is always bringing something new; they do not a bit believe that the desire to make them comfortable and happy is the root of it; they believe, on the contrary, that you are aiming at something which they do not understand—that you mean to 'take away their religion'; in a word, that the end and object of all these continual changes is to make Indians not what they are and what they like to be, but something new and different from what they are, and what they would not like to be." In the East, in a word, we are attempting to put new wine into old bottles—to pour what we can of a civilisation whose spirit is progress into the form of a civilisation whose spirit is fixity, and whether we shall succeed or not is perhaps the most interesting question in an age abounding almost beyond example in questions of political interest.

Historical inquiries show that the feeling of the Hindoos is the old feeling, and that the feeling of the Englishman is a

modern feeling. "Old law rests," as Sir Henry Maine puts it, "not on contract but on status." The life of ancient civilisation, so far as legal records go, runs back to a time when every important particular of life was settled by a usage which was social, political, and religious, as we should now say, all in one—which those who obeyed it could not have been able to analyse, for those distinctions had no place in their mind and language, but which they felt to be a usage of imperishable import, and above all things to be kept unchanged. In former papers I have shown, or at least tried to show, why these customary civilisations were the only ones which suited an early society; why, so to say, they alone could have been first; in what manner they had in their very structure a decisive advantage over all competitors. But now comes the further question: If fixity is an invariable ingredient in early civilisations, how then did any civilisation become unfixed? No doubt most civilisations stuck where they first were; no doubt we see now why stagnation is the rule of the world, and why progress is the very rare exception; but we do not learn what it is which has caused progress in these few cases, or the absence of what it is which has denied it in all others.

To this question history gives a very clear and very remarkable answer. It is that the change from the age of status to the age of choice was first made in states where the government was to a great and a growing extent a government by discussion, and where the subjects of that discussion were in some degree abstract, or, as we should say, matters of principle. It was in the small republics of Greece and Italy that the chain of custom was first broken. "Liberty said, Let there be light, and, like a sunrise on the sea, Athens arose," says Shelley, and his historical philosophy is in this case far more correct than is usual with him. A free state—a state with liberty—means a state, call it republic or call it monarchy, in which the sovereign power is divided between many persons, and in which there is a discussion among those persons. Of these the Greek republics were the first in history, if not in time, and Athens was the greatest of those republics.

After the event it is easy to see why the teaching of history

should be this and nothing else. It is easy to see why the common discussion of common actions or common interests should become the root of change and progress. In early society, originality in life was forbidden and repressed by the fixed rule of life. It may not have been quite so much so in ancient Greece as in some other parts of the world. But it was very much so even there. As a recent writer has well said, "Law then presented itself to men's minds as something venerable and unchangeable, as old as the city; it had been delivered by the founder himself, when he laid the walls of the city, and kindled its sacred fire". An ordinary man who wished to strike out a new path, to begin a new and important practice by himself, would have been peremptorily required to abandon his novelties on pain of death; he was deviating, he would be told, from the ordinances imposed by the gods on his nation, and he must not do so to please himself. On the contrary, others were deeply interested in his actions. If he disobeyed, the gods might inflict grievous harm on all the people as well as him. Each partner in the most ancient kind of partnerships was supposed to have the power of attracting the wrath of the divinities on the entire firm, upon the other partners quite as much as upon himself. The quaking bystanders in a superstitious age would soon have slain an isolated bold man in the beginning of his innovations. What Macaulay so relied on as the incessant source of progress—the desire of man to better his condition—was not then permitted to work; man was required to live as his ancestors had lived.

Still further away from those times were the "free thought" and the "advancing sciences" of which we now hear so much. The first and most natural subject upon which human thought concerns itself is religion; the first wish of the half-emancipated thinker is to use his reason on the great problems of human destiny—to find out whence he came and whither he goes, to form for himself the most reasonable idea of God which he can form. But, as Mr. Grote happily said—"This is usually what ancient times would not let a man do. His *gens* or his *φρατρία* required him to believe as they believed." Toleration is of all ideas the most modern, be-

cause the notion that the bad religion of A cannot impair, here or hereafter, the welfare of B, is, strange to say, a modern idea. And the help of "science," at that stage of thought, is still more nugatory. Physical science, as we conceive it—that is, the systematic investigation of external nature in detail—did not then exist. A few isolated observations on surface things —a half-correct calendar, secrets mainly of priestly invention, and in priestly custody—were all that was then imagined; the idea of using a settled study of nature as a basis for the discovery of new instruments and new things, did not then exist. It is indeed a modern idea, and is peculiar to a few European countries even yet. In the most intellectual city of the ancient world, in its most intellectual age, Socrates, its most intellectual inhabitant, discouraged the study of physics because they engendered uncertainty, and did not augment human happiness. The kind of knowledge which is most connected with human progress now was that least connected with it then.

But a government by discussion, if it can be borne, at once breaks down the yoke of fixed custom. The idea of the two is inconsistent. As far as it goes, the mere putting up of a subject to discussion, with the object of being guided by that discussion, is a clear admission that that subject is in no degree settled by established rule, and that men are free to choose in it. It is an admission too that there is no sacred authority—no one transcendent and divinely appointed man whom in that matter the community is bound to obey. And if a single subject or group of subjects be once admitted to discussion, ere long the habit of discussion comes to be established, the sacred charm of use and wont to be dissolved. "Democracy," it has been said in modern times, "is like the grave; it takes, but it does not give." The same is true of "discussion". Once effectually submit a subject to that ordeal, and you can never withdraw it again; you can never again clothe it with mystery, or fence it by consecration; it remains for ever open to free choice, and exposed to profane deliberation.

The only subjects which can be first submitted, or which till a very late age of civilisation can be submitted to discussion in the community, are the questions involving the visible

and pressing interests of the community; they are political questions of high and urgent import. If a nation has in any considerable degree gained the habit, and exhibited the capacity, to discuss these questions with freedom, and to decide them with discretion, to argue much on politics and not to argue ruinously, an enormous advance in other kinds of civilisation may confidently be predicted for it. And the reason is a plain deduction from the principles which we have found to guide early civilisation. The first prehistoric men were passionate savages, with the greatest difficulty coerced into order and compressed into a state. For ages were spent in beginning that order and founding that state; the only sufficient and effectual agent in so doing was consecrated custom; but then that custom gathered over everything, arrested all onward progress, and stayed the originality of mankind. If, therefore, a nation is able to gain the benefit of custom without the evil—if after ages of waiting it can have order and choice together—at once the fatal clog is removed, and the ordinary springs of progress, as in a modern community we conceive them, begin their elastic action.

Discussion, too, has incentives to progress peculiar to itself. It gives a premium to intelligence. To set out the arguments required to determine political action with such force and effect that they really should determine it, is a high and great exertion of intellect. Of course, all such arguments are produced under conditions; the argument abstractedly best is not necessarily the winning argument. Political discussion must move those who have to act; it must be framed in the ideas, and be consonant with the precedent, of its time, just as it must speak its language. But within these marked conditions good discussion is better than bad; no people can bear a government of discussion for a day, which does not, within the boundaries of its prejudices and its ideas, prefer good reasoning to bad reasoning, sound argument to unsound. A prize for argumentative mind is given in free states, to which no other states have anything to compare.

Tolerance too is learned in discussion, and, as history shows, is only so learned. In all customary societies bigotry

is the ruling principle. In rude places to this day any one who says anything new is looked on with suspicion, and is persecuted by opinion if not injured by penalty. One of the greatest pains to human nature is the pain of a new idea. It is, as common people say, so "upsetting"; it makes you think that, after all, your favourite notions may be wrong, your firmest beliefs ill-founded; it is certain that till now there was no place allotted in your mind to the new and startling inhabitant, and now that it has conquered an entrance you do not at once see which of your old ideas it will or will not turn out, with which of them it can be reconciled, and with which it is at essential enmity. Naturally, therefore, common men hate a new idea, and are disposed more or less to ill-treat the original man who brings it. Even nations with long habits of discussion are intolerant enough. In England, where there is on the whole probably a freer discussion of a greater number of subjects than ever was before in the world, we know how much power bigotry retains. But discussion, to be successful, requires tolerance. It fails wherever, as in a French political assembly, any one who hears anything which he dislikes tries to howl it down. If we know that a nation is capable of enduring continuous discussion, we know that it is capable of practising with equanimity continuous tolerance.

The power of a government by discussion as an instrument of elevation plainly depends—other things being equal—on the greatness or littleness of the things to be discussed. There are periods when great ideas are "in the air," and when, from some cause or other, even common persons seem to partake of an unusual elevation. The age of Elizabeth in England was conspicuously such a time. The new idea of the Reformation in religion, and the enlargement of the *mœnia mundi* by the discovery of new and singular lands, taken together, gave an impulse to thought which few, if any, ages can equal. The discussion, though not wholly free, was yet far freer than in the average of ages and countries. Accordingly, every pursuit seemed to start forward. Poetry, science, and architecture, different as they are, and removed as they all are at first sight from such an influence as discussion, were suddenly

started onward. Macaulay would have said you might rightly read the power of discussion "in the poetry of Shakespeare, in the prose of Bacon, in the oriels of Longleat, and the stately pinnacles of Burleigh". This is, in truth, but another case of the principle of which I have had occasion to say so much as to the character of ages and countries. If any particular power is much prized in an age, those possessed of that power will be imitated; those deficient in that power will be despised. In consequence an unusual quantity of that power will be developed, and be conspicuous. Within certain limits vigorous and elevated thought was respected in Elizabeth's time, and, therefore, vigorous and elevated thinkers were many and the effect went far beyond the cause. It penetrated into physical science, for which very few men cared; and it began a reform in philosophy to which almost all were then opposed. In a word, the temper of the age encouraged originality, and in consequence original men started into prominence, went hither and thither where they liked, arrived at goals which the age never expected, and so made it ever memorable.

In this manner all the great movements of thought in ancient and modern times have been nearly connected in time with government by discussion. Athens, Rome, the Italian republics of the Middle Ages, the *communes* and states-general of feudal Europe, have all had a special and peculiar quickening influence, which they owed to their freedom, and which states without that freedom have never communicated. And it has been at the time of great epochs of thought—at the Peloponnesian War, at the fall of the Roman Republic, at the Reformation, at the French Revolution—that such liberty of speaking and thinking have produced their full effect.

It is on this account that the discussions of savage tribes have produced so little effect in emancipating those tribes from their despotic customs. The oratory of the North American Indian—the first savage whose peculiarities fixed themselves in the public imagination—has become celebrated, and yet the North American Indians were scarcely, if at all, better orators than many other savages. Almost all of the savages who have melted away before the Englishman were

better speakers than he is. But the oratory of the savages has led to nothing, and was likely to lead to nothing. It is a discussion not of principles, but of undertakings; its topics are whether expedition A will answer, and should be undertaken; whether expedition B will not answer, and should not be undertaken; whether village A is the best village to plunder, or whether village B is a better. Such discussions augment the vigour of language, encourage a debating facility, and develop those gifts of demeanour and of gesture which excite the confidence of the hearers. But they do not excite the speculative intellect, do not lead men to argue speculative doctrines, or to question ancient principles. They, in some material respects, improve the sheep within the fold; but they do not help them or incline them to leap out of the fold.

The next question, therefore, is, Why did discussions in some cases relate to prolific ideas, and why did discussions in other cases relate only to isolated transactions? The reply which history suggests is very clear and very remarkable. Some races of men at our earliest knowledge of them have already acquired the basis of a free constitution; they have already the rudiments of a complex polity—a monarch, a senate, and a general meeting of citizens. The Greeks were one of those races, and it happened, as was natural, that there was in process of time a struggle, the earliest that we know of, between the aristocratical party, originally represented by the senate, and the popular party, represented by the "general meeting". This is plainly a question of principle, and its being so has led to its history being written more than two thousand years afterwards in a very remarkable manner. Some seventy years ago an English country gentleman named Mitford, who like so many of his age, had been terrified into aristocratic opinions by the first French Revolution, suddenly found that the history of the Peloponnesian War was the reflex of his own time. He took up his Thucydides, and there he saw, as in a mirror, the progress and the struggles of his age. It required some freshness of mind to see this; at least, it had been hidden for many centuries. All the modern histories of Greece before Mitford had but the vaguest idea of it; and not

being a man of supreme originality, he would doubtless have had very little idea of it either, except that the analogy of what he saw helped him by a telling object-lesson to the understanding of what he read. Just as in every country of Europe in 1793 there were two factions, one of the old-world aristocracy, and the other of the incoming democracy, just so there was in every city of ancient Greece, in the year 400 B.C., one party of the many and another of the few. This Mr. Mitford perceived, and being a strong aristocrat, he wrote a "history," which is little except a party pamphlet, and which, it must be said, is even now readable on that very account. The vigour of passion with which it was written puts life into the words, and retains the attention of the reader. And that is not all. Mr. Grote, the great scholar whom we have had lately to mourn, also recognising the identity between the struggles of Athens and Sparta and the struggles of our modern world, and taking violently the contrary side to that of Mitford, being as great a democrat as Mitford was an aristocrat, wrote a reply, far above Mitford's history in power and learning, but being in its main characteristic almost identical, being above all things a book of vigorous political passion, written for persons who care for politics, and not, as almost all histories of antiquity are and must be, the book of a man who cares for scholarship more than for anything else, written mainly if not exclusively, for scholars. And the effect of fundamental political discussion was the same in ancient as in modern times. The whole customary ways of thought were at once shaken by it, and shaken not only in the closets of philosophers, but in the common thought and daily business of ordinary men. The "liberation of humanity," as Goethe used to call it—the deliverance of men from the yoke of inherited usage, and of rigid, unquestionable law—was begun in Greece, and had many of its greatest effects, good and evil, on Greece. It is just because of the analogy between the controversies of that time and those of our times that some one has said, "Classical history is a part of modern history; it is mediæval history only which is ancient".

If there had been no discussion of principle in Greece,

probably she would still have produced works of art. Homer contains no such discussion. The speeches in the "Iliad," which Mr. Gladstone, the most competent of living judges, maintains to be the finest ever composed by man, are not discussions of principle. There is no more tendency in them to critical disquisition than there is to political economy. In Herodotus you have the beginning of the age of discussion. He belongs in his essence to the age which is going out. He refers with reverence to established ordinance and fixed religion. Still, in his travels through Greece, he must have heard endless political arguments; and accordingly you can find in his book many incipient traces of abstract political disquisition. The discourses on democracy, aristocracy, and monarchy, which he puts into the mouth of the Persian conspirators when the monarchy was vacant, have justly been called absurd, as speeches supposed to have been spoken by those persons. No Asiatic ever thought of such things. You might as well imagine Saul or David speaking them as those to whom Herodotus attributes them. They are Greek speeches, full of free Greek discussion, and suggested by the experience, already considerable, of the Greeks in the results of discussion. The age of debate is beginning, and even Herodotus, the least of a wrangler of any man, and the most of a sweet and simple narrator, felt the effect. When we come to Thucydides, the results of discussion are as full as they have ever been; his light is pure, "dry light," free from the "humours" of habit, and purged from consecrated usage. As Grote's history often reads like a report to Parliament, so half Thucydides reads like a speech, or materials for a speech, in the Athenian Assembly. Of later times it is unnecessary to speak. Every page of Aristotle and Plato bears ample and indelible trace of the age of discussion in which they lived; and thought cannot possibly be freer. The deliverance of the speculative intellect from traditional and customary authority was altogether complete.

No doubt the "detachment" from prejudice, and the subjection to reason, which I ascribe to ancient Athens, only went down a very little way among the population of it. Two great classes of the people, the slaves and women, were almost

excluded from such qualities; even the free population doubtless contained a far greater proportion of very ignorant and very superstitious persons than we are in the habit of imagining. We fix our attention on the best specimens of Athenian culture—on the books which have descended to us, and we forget that the corporate action of the Athenian people at various critical junctures exhibited the most gross superstition. Still, as far as the intellectual and cultivated part of society is concerned, the triumph of reason was complete; the minds of the highest philosophers were then as ready to obey evidence and reason as they have ever been since; probably they were more ready. The rule of custom over them at least had been wholly broken, and the primary conditions of intellectual progress were in that respect satisfied.

It may be said that I am giving too much weight to the classical idea of human development; that history contains the record of another progress as well; that in a certain sense there was progress in Judæa as well as in Athens. And unquestionably there was progress, but it was only progress upon a single subject. If we except religion and omit also all that the Jews had learned from foreigners, it may be doubted if there be much else new between the time of Samuel and that of Malachi. In religion there was progress, but without it there was not any. This was due to the cause of that progress. All over antiquity, all over the East, and over other parts of the world which preserve more or less nearly their ancient condition, there are two classes of religious teachers—one, the priests, the inheritors of past accredited inspiration; the other, the prophet, the possessor of a like present inspiration. Curtius describes the distinction well in relation to the condition of Greece with which history first presents us:—

"The mantic art is an institution totally different from the priesthood. It is based on the belief that the gods are in constant proximity to men, and in their government of the world, which comprehends every thing both great and small, will not disdain to manifest their will; nay, it seems necessary that, whenever any hitch has arisen in the moral system of the human world, this should also manifest itself by some sign in

the world of nature, if only mortals are able to understand and avail themselves of these divine hints.

"For this a special capacity is requisite; not a capacity which can be learnt like a human art or science, but rather a peculiar state of grace in the case of single individuals and single families whose ears and eyes are opened to the divine revelations, and who participate more largely than the rest of mankind in the divine spirit. Accordingly it is their office and calling to assert themselves as organs of the divine will; they are justified in opposing their authority to every power of the world. On this head conflicts were unavoidable, and the reminiscences living in the Greek people, of the agency of a Tiresias and Calchas, prove how the Heroic kings experienced not only support and aid, but also opposition and violent protests, from the mouths of the men of prophecy."

In Judæa there was exactly the same opposition as elsewhere. All that is new comes from the prophets; all which is old is retained by the priests. But the peculiarity of Judæa —a peculiarity which I do not for a moment pretend that I can explain—is that the prophetic revelations are, taken as a whole, indisputably improvements; that they contain, as time goes on, at each succeeding epoch, higher and better views of religion. But the peculiarity is not to my present purpose. My point is that there is no such spreading impetus in progress thus caused as there is in progress caused by discussion. To receive a particular conclusion upon the *ipse dixit*, upon the accepted authority of an admired instructor, is obviously not so vivifying to the argumentative and questioning intellect as to argue out conclusions for yourself. Accordingly the religious progress caused by the prophets did not break down that ancient code of authoritative usage. On the contrary, the two combined. In each generation the conservative influence "built the sepulchres" and accepted the teaching of past prophets, even while it was slaying and persecuting those who were living. But discussion and custom cannot be thus combined; their "method," as modern philosophers would say, is antagonistic. Accordingly, the progress of the classical states gradually awakened the whole intellect; that of Judæa was

partial and improved religion only. And, therefore, in a history of intellectual progress, the classical fills the superior and the Jewish the inferior place; just as in a special history of theology only, the places of the two might be interchanged.

A second experiment has been tried on the same subject-matter. The characteristic of the Middle Ages may be approximately—though only approximately—described as a return to the period of authoritative usage and as an abandonment of the classical habit of independent and self-choosing thought. I do not for an instant mean that this is an exact description of the main mediæval characteristic; nor can I discuss how far that characteristic was an advance upon those of previous times; its friends say it is far better than the peculiarities of the classical period; its enemies that it is far worse. But both friends and enemies will admit that the most marked feature of the Middle Ages may roughly be described as I have described it. And my point is that just as this mediæval characteristic was that of a return to the essence of the customary epoch which had marked the pre-Athenian times, so it was dissolved much in the same manner as the influence of Athens, and other influences like it, claim to have dissolved that customary epoch.

The principal agent in breaking up the persistent mediæval customs, which were so fixed that they seemed likely to last for ever, or till some historical catastrophe overwhelmed them, was the popular element in the ancient polity which was everywhere diffused in the Middle Ages. The Germanic tribes brought with them from their ancient dwelling-place a polity containing, like the classical, a king, a council, and a popular assembly; and wherever they went, they carried these elements and varied them, as force compelled or circumstances required. As far as England is concerned, the excellent dissertations of Mr. Freeman and Mr. Stubbs have proved this in the amplest manner, and brought it home to persons who cannot claim to possess much antiquarian learning. The history of the English Constitution, as far as the world cares for it, is, in fact, the complex history of the popular element in this ancient polity, which was sometimes weaker and sometimes stronger, but which

has never died out, has commonly possessed great though varying power, and is now entirely predominant. The history of this growth is the history of the English people; and the discussions about this Constitution and the discussions within it, the controversies as to its structure and the controversies as to its true effects, have mainly trained the English political intellect, in so far as it is trained. But in much of Europe, and in England particularly, the influence of religion has been very different from what it was in antiquity. It has been an influence of discussion. Since Luther's time there has been a conviction more or less rooted, that a man may by an intellectual process think out a religion for himself, and that, as the highest of all duties, he ought to do so. The influence of the political discussion, and the influence of the religious discussion, have been so long and so firmly combined, and have so effectually enforced one another, that the old notions of loyalty, and fealty, and authority, as they existed in the Middle Ages, have now over the best minds almost no effect.

It is true that the influence of discussion is not the only force which has produced this vast effect. Both in ancient and in modern times other forces co-operated with it. Trade, for example, is obviously a force which has done much to bring men of different customs and different beliefs into close contiguity, and has thus aided to change the customs and the beliefs of them all. Colonisation is another such influence: it settles men among aborigines of alien race and usages, and it commonly compels the colonists not to be over-strict in the choice of their own elements; they are obliged to coalesce with and "adopt" useful bands and useful men, though their ancestral customs may not be identical, nay, though they may be, in fact, opposite to their own. In modern Europe, the existence of a cosmopolite Church, claiming to be above nations, and really extending through nations, and the scattered remains of Roman law and Roman civilisation co-operated with the liberating influence of political discussion. And so did other causes also. But perhaps in no case have these subsidiary causes alone been able to generate intellectual freedom; certainly in all the most remarkable cases the influence of discussion has presided

at the creation of that freedom, and has been active and dominant in it.

No doubt apparent cases of exception may easily be found. It may be said that in the court of Augustus there was much general intellectual freedom, an almost entire detachment from ancient prejudice, but that there was no free political discussion at all. But, then, the ornaments of that time were derived from a time of great freedom: it was the republic which trained the men whom the empire ruled. The close congregation of most miscellaneous elements under the empire, was, no doubt, of itself unfavourable to inherited prejudice, and favourable to intellectual exertion. Yet, except in the instance of the Church, which is a peculiar subject that requires a separate discussion, how little was added to what the republic left! The power of free interchange of ideas being wanting, the ideas themselves were barren. Also, no doubt, much intellectual freedom may emanate from countries of free political discussion, and penetrate to countries where that discussion is limited. Thus the intellectual freedom of France in the eighteenth century was in great part owing to the proximity of and incessant intercourse with England and Holland. Voltaire resided among us; and every page of the *Esprit des Lois* proves how much Montesquieu learned from living here. But, of course, it was only part of the French culture which was so derived: the germ might be foreign, but the tissue was native. And very naturally, for it would be absurd to call the *ancien régime* a government without discussion: discussion abounded there, only, by reason of the bad form of the government, it was never sure with ease and certainty to affect political action. The despotism "tempered by epigram," was a government which permitted argument of licentious freedom within changing limits, and which was ruled by that argument spasmodically and practically though not in name or consistently.

But though in the earliest and in the latest time government by discussion has been a principal organ for improving mankind, yet, from its origin, it is a plant of singular delicacy. At first the chances are much against its living. In the beginning, the members of a free state are of necessity few. The essence of it

requires that discussion shall be brought home to those members. But in early time, when writing is difficult, reading rare, and representation undiscovered, those who are to be guided by the discussion must hear it with their own ears, must be brought face to face with the orator, and must feel his influence for themselves. The first free states were little towns, smaller than any political division which we now have, except the Republic of Andorre, which is a sort of vestige of them. It is in the market-place of the country town, as we should now speak, and in petty matters concerning the market-town, that discussion began, and thither all the long train of its consequences may be traced back. Some historical inquirers, like myself, can hardly look at such a place without some sentimental musing, poor and trivial as the thing seems. But such small towns are very feeble. Numbers in the earliest wars, as in the latest, are a main source of victory. And in early times one kind of state is very common and is exceedingly numerous. In every quarter of the globe we find great populations compacted by traditional custom and consecrated sentiment, which are ruled by some soldier—generally some soldier of a foreign tribe, who has conquered them, and, as it has been said, "vaulted on the back" of them, or whose ancestors have done so. These great populations ruled by a single will, have, doubtless, trodden down and destroyed innumerable little cities who were just beginning their freedom.

In this way the Greek cities in Asia were subjected to the Persian power, and so *ought* the cities in Greece proper to have been subjected also. Every schoolboy must have felt that nothing but amazing folly and unmatched mismanagement saved Greece from conquest both in the time of Xerxes and in that of Darius. The fortunes of intellectual civilisation were then at the mercy of what seems an insignificant probability. If the Persian leaders had only shown that decent skill and ordinary military prudence which it was likely they would show, Grecian freedom would have been then at an end. Athens, like so many Ionian cities on the other side of the Ægean, would have been absorbed into a great despotism; all we now remember her for we should not remember, for it

would never have occurred. Her citizens might have been ingenious, and imitative, and clever; they could not certainly have been free and original. Rome was preserved from subjection to a great empire by her fortunate distance from one. The early wars of Rome are with cities like Rome—about equal in size, though inferior in valour. It was only when she had conquered Italy that she began to measure herself against Asiatic despotisms. She became great enough to beat them before she advanced far enough to contend with them. But such great good fortune was and must be rare. Unnumbered little cities which might have rivalled Rome or Athens doubtless perished without a sign long before history was imagined. The small size and slight strength of early free states made them always liable to easy destruction.

And their internal frailty is even greater. As soon as discussion begins the savage propensities of men break forth; even in modern communities, where those propensities, too, have been weakened by ages of culture, and repressed by ages of obedience, as soon as a vital topic for discussion is well started the keenest and most violent passions break forth. Easily destroyed as are early free states by forces from without, they are even more liable to destruction by forces from within.

On this account such states are very rare in history. Upon the first view of the facts a speculation might even be set up that they were peculiar to a particular race. By far the most important free institutions, and the only ones which have left living representatives in the world, are the offspring either of the first constitutions of the classical nations or of the first constitutions of the Germanic nations. All living freedom runs back to them, and those truths which at first sight would seem the whole of historical freedom, can be traced to them. And both the Germanic and the classical nations belong to what ethnologists call the Aryan race. Plausibly it might be argued that the power of forming free states was superior in and peculiar to that family of mankind. But unfortunately for this easy theory the facts are inconsistent with it. In the first place, all the so-called Aryan race certainly is not free.

The eastern Aryans—those, for example, who speak languages derived from the Sanscrit—are amongst the most slavish divisions of mankind. To offer the Bengalese a free constitution, and to expect them to work one, would be the maximum of human folly. There then must be something else besides Aryan descent which is necessary to fit men for discussion and train them for liberty; and, what is worse for the argument we are opposing, some non-Aryan races have been capable of freedom. Carthage, for example, was a Semitic republic. We do not know all the details of its constitution, but we know enough for our present purpose. We know that it was a government in which many proposers took part, and under which discussion was constant, active, and conclusive. No doubt Tyre, the parent city of Carthage, the other colonies of Tyre besides Carthage, and the colonies of Carthage, were all as free as Carthage. We have thus a whole group of ancient republics of non-Aryan race, and one which, being more ancient than the classical republics, could not have borrowed from or imitated them. So that the theory which would make government by discussion the exclusive patrimony of a single race of mankind is on the face of it untenable.

I am not prepared with any simple counter theory. I cannot profess to explain completely why a very small minimum of mankind were, as long as we know of them, possessed of a polity which as time went on suggested discussions of principle, and why the great majority of mankind had nothing like it. This is almost as hopeless as asking why Milton was a genius and why Bacon was a philosopher. Indeed it is the same, because the causes which give birth to the startling varieties of individual character, and those which give birth to similar varieties of national character, are, in fact, the same. I have, indeed, endeavoured to show that a marked type of individual character once originating in a nation and once strongly preferred by it, is likely to be fixed on it and to be permanent in it, from causes which were stated. Granted the beginning of the type, we may, I think, explain its development and aggravation; but we cannot in the least

explain why the incipient type of curious characters broke out, if I may so say, in one place rather than in another. Climate and "physical" surroundings, in the largest sense, have unquestionably much influence; they are one factor in the cause, but they are not the only factor; for we find most dissimilar races of men living in the same climate and affected by the same surroundings, and we have every reason to believe that those unlike races have so lived as neighbours for ages. The cause of types must be something outside the tribe acting on something within—something inherited by the tribe. But what that something is I do not know that any one can in the least explain.

The following conditions may, I think, be historically traced to the nation capable of a polity, which suggests principles for discussion, and so leads to progress. First, the nation must possess the *patria potestas* in some form so marked as to give family life distinctness and precision, and to make a home education and a home discipline probable and possible. While descent is traced only through the mother, and while the family is therefore a vague entity, no progress to a high polity is possible. Secondly, that polity would seem to have been created very gradually; by the aggregation of families into clans or *gentes*, and of clans into nations, and then again by the widening of nations, so as to include circumjacent outsiders, as well as the first compact and sacred group —the number of parties to a discussion was at first augmented very slowly. Thirdly, the number of "open" subjects—as we should say nowadays—that is, of subjects on which public opinion was optional, and on which discussion was admitted, was at first very small. Custom ruled everything originally, and the area of free argument was enlarged but very slowly. If I am at all right, that area could only be enlarged thus slowly, for custom was in early days the cement of society, and if you suddenly questioned such custom you would destroy society. But though the existence of these conditions may be traced historically, and though the reason of them may be explained philosophically, they do not completely solve the question why some nations have the polity and some

not; on the contrary, they plainly leave a large "residual phenomenon" unexplained and unknown.

II.

In this manner politics or discussion broke up the old bonds of custom which were now strangling mankind, though they had once aided and helped it. But this is only one of the many gifts which those polities have conferred, are conferring, and will confer on mankind. I am not going to write an eulogium on liberty, but I wish to set down three points which have not been sufficiently noticed.

Civilised ages inherit the human nature which was victorious in barbarous ages, and that nature is, in many respects, not at all suited to civilised circumstances. A main and principal excellence in the early times of the human races is the impulse to action. The problems before men are then plain and simple. The man who works hardest, the man who kills the most deer, the man who catches the most fish—even later on, the man who tends the largest herds, or the man who tills the largest field—is the man who succeeds; the nation which is quickest to kill its enemies, or which kills most of its enemies, is the nation which succeeds. All the inducements of early society tend to foster immediate action; all its penalties fall on the man who pauses; the traditional wisdom of those times was never weary of inculcating that "delays are dangerous," and that the sluggish man—the man "who roasteth not that which he took in hunting"—will not prosper on the earth, and indeed will very soon perish out of it. And in consequence an inability to stay quiet, an irritable desire to act directly, is one of the most conspicuous failings of mankind.

Pascal said that most of the evils of life arose from "man's being unable to sit still in a room"; and though I do not go that length, it is certain that we should have been a far wiser race than we are if we had been readier to sit quiet—we should have known much better the way in which it was best to act when we came to act. The rise of physical science, the first great body of practical truth provable to all men, exemplifies

this in the plainest way. If it had not been for quiet people, who sat still and studied the sections of the cone, if other quiet people had not sat still and studied the theory of infinitesimals, or other quiet people had not sat still and worked out the doctrine of chances, the most "dreamy moonshine," as the purely practical mind would consider, of all human pursuits; if "idle star-gazers" had not watched long and carefully the motions of the heavenly bodies—our modern astronomy would have been impossible, and without our astronomy "our ships, our colonies, our seamen," all which makes modern life, modern life could not have existed. Ages of sedentary, quiet thinking people were required before that noisy existence began, and without those pale preliminary students it never could have been brought into being. And nine-tenths of modern science is in this respect the same: it is the produce of men whom their contemporaries thought dreamers—who were laughed at for caring for what did not concern them—who, as the proverb went, "walked into a well from looking at the stars"—who were believed to be useless, if any one could be such. And the conclusion is plain that if there had been more such people, if the world had not laughed at those there were, if rather it had encouraged them there would have been a great accumulation of proved science ages before there was. It was the irritable activity, the "wish to be doing something," that prevented it. Most men inherited a nature too eager and too restless to be quiet and find out things; and even worse—with their idle clamour they "disturbed the brooding hen," they would not let those be quiet who wished to be so, and out of whose calm thought much good might have come forth.

If we consider how much science has done and how much it is doing for mankind, and if the over-activity of men is proved to be the cause why science came so late into the world, and is so small and scanty still, that will convince most people that our over-activity is a very great evil. But this is only part, and perhaps not the greatest part of the harm that over-activity does. As I have said, it is inherited from times when life was simple, objects were plain, and quick action

generally led to desirable ends. If A kills B before B kills A, then A survives, and the human race is a race of A's. But the issues of life are plain no longer. To act rightly in modern society requires a great deal of previous study, a great deal of assimilated information, a great deal of sharpened imagination; and these prerequisites of sound action require much time, and, I was going to say, much "lying in the sun," a long period of "mere passiveness". Even the art of killing one another, which at first particularly trained men to be quick, now requires them to be slow. A hasty general is the worst of generals nowadays; the best is a sort of Von Moltke, who is passive if any man ever was passive; who is "silent in seven languages"; who possesses more and better accumulated information as to the best way of killing people than any one who ever lived. This man plays a restrained and considerate game of chess with his enemy. I wish the art of benefiting men had kept pace with the art of destroying them; for though war has become slow, philanthropy has remained hasty. The most melancholy of human reflections, perhaps, is that, on the whole, it is a question whether the benevolence of mankind does most good or harm. Great good, no doubt, philanthropy does, but then it also does great evil. It augments so much vice, it multiplies so much suffering, it brings to life such great populations to suffer and to be vicious, that it is open to argument whether it be or be not an evil to the world, and this is entirely because excellent people fancy that they can do much by rapid action—that they will most benefit the world when they most relieve their own feelings; that as soon as an evil is seen "something" ought to be done to stay and prevent it. One may incline to hope that the balance of good over evil is in favour of benevolence: one can hardly bear to think that it is not so; but anyhow it is certain that there is a most heavy debit of evil, and that this burden might almost all have been spared us if philanthropists as well as others had not inherited from their barbarous forefathers a wild passion for instant action.

Even in commerce, which is now the main occupation of mankind, and one in which there is a ready test of success

and failure wanting in many higher pursuits, the same disposition to excessive action is very apparent to careful observers. Part of every mania is caused by the impossibility to get people to confine themselves to the amount of business for which their capital is sufficient, and in which they can engage safely. In some degree, of course, this is caused by the wish to get rich; but in a considerable degree, too, by the mere love of activity. There is a greater propensity to action in such men than they have the means of gratifying. Operations with their own capital will only occupy four hours of the day, and they wish to be active and to be industrious for eight hours, and so they are ruined. If they could only have sat idle the other four hours, they would have been rich men. The amusements of mankind, at least of the English part of mankind, teach the same lesson. Our shooting, our hunting, our travelling, our climbing have become laborious pursuits. It is a common saying abroad that "an Englishman's notion of a holiday is a fatiguing journey"; and this is only another way of saying that the immense energy and activity which have given us our place in the world have in many cases descended to those who do not find in modern life any mode of using that activity, and of venting that energy.

Even the abstract speculations of mankind bear conspicuous traces of the same excessive impulse. Every sort of philosophy has been systematised, and yet as these philosophies utterly contradict one another, most of them cannot be true. Unproved abstract principles without number have been eagerly caught up by sanguine men, and then carefully spun out into books and theories, which were to explain the whole world. But the world goes clear against these abstractions, and it must do so, as they require it to go in antagonistic directions. The mass of a system attracts the young and impresses the unwary; but cultivated people are very dubious about it. They are ready to receive hints and suggestions, and the smallest real truth is ever welcome. But a large book of deductive philosophy is much to be suspected. No doubt the deductions may be right; in most writers they are so; but where did the premises come from? Who is sure that they

are the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, of the matter in hand? Who is not almost sure beforehand that they will contain a strange mixture of truth and error, and therefore that it will not be worth while to spend life in reasoning over their consequences? In a word, the superfluous energy of mankind has flowed over into philosophy, and has worked into big systems what should have been left as little suggestions.

And if the old systems of thought are not true *as* systems, neither is the new revolt from them to be trusted in its whole vigour. There is the same original vice in that also. There is an excessive energy in revolutions if there is such energy anywhere. The passion for action is quite as ready to pull down as to build up; probably it is more ready, for the task is easier.

> "Old things need not be therefore true,
> O brother men, nor yet the new;
> Ah, still awhile the old thought retain,
> And yet consider it again."

But this is exactly what the human mind will not do. It will act somehow at once. It will not "consider it again".

But it will be said, What has government by discussion to do with these things? Will it prevent them, or even mitigate them? It can and does do both in the very plainest way. If you want to stop instant and immediate action, always make it a condition that the action shall not begin till a considerable number of persons have talked over it, and have agreed on it. If those persons be people of different temperaments, different ideas, and different educations, you have an almost infallible security that nothing, or almost nothing, will be done with excessive rapidity. Each kind of persons will have their spokesman; each spokesman will have his characteristic objection, and each his characteristic counter-proposition, and so in the end nothing will probably be done, or at least only the minimum which is plainly urgent. In many cases this delay may be dangerous; in many cases quick action will be preferable. A campaign, as Macaulay well says, cannot be directed by a "debating society"; and many other kinds of action also require a single and absolute general. But for the purpose

now in hand—that of preventing hasty action, and ensuring elaborate consideration—there is no device like a polity of discussion.

The enemies of this object—the people who want to act quickly—see this very distinctly. They are for ever explaining that the present is "an age of committees," that the committees do nothing, that all evaporates in talk. Their great enemy is Parliamentary government; they call it, after Mr. Carlyle, the "national palaver"; they add up the hours that are consumed in it, and the speeches which are made in it, and they sigh for a time when England might again be ruled, as it once was, by a Cromwell—that is, when an eager, absolute man might do exactly what other eager men wished, and do it immediately. All these invectives are perpetual and many-sided; they come from philosophers, each of whom wants some new scheme tried; from philanthropists, who want some evil abated; from revolutionists, who want some old institution destroyed; from new æraists, who want their new æra started forthwith. And they all are distinct admissions that a polity of discussion is the greatest hindrance to the inherited mistake of human nature, to the desire to act promptly, which in a simple age is so excellent, but which in a later and complex time leads to so much evil.

The same accusation against our age sometimes takes a more general form. It is alleged that our energies are diminishing; that ordinary and average men have not the quick determination nowadays which they used to have when the world was younger; that not only do not committees and Parliaments act with rapid decisiveness, but that no one now so acts. And I hope that in fact this is true, for according to me, it proves that the hereditary barbaric impulse is decaying and dying out. So far from thinking the quality attributed to us a defect, I wish that those who complain of it were far more right than I much fear they are. Still, certainly, eager and violent action *is* somewhat diminished, though only by a small fraction of what it ought to be. And I believe that this is in great part due, in England at least, to our government by discussion, which has fostered a general intellectual tone, a

diffused disposition to weigh evidence, a conviction that much may be said on every side of everything which the elder and more fanatic ages of the world wanted. This is the real reason why our energies seem so much less than those of our fathers. When we have a definite end in view, which we know we want, and which we think we know how to obtain, we can act well enough. The campaigns of our soldiers are as energetic as any campaigns ever were; the speculations of our merchants have greater promptitude, greater audacity, greater vigour than any such speculations ever had before. In old times a few ideas got possession of men and communities, but this is happily now possible no longer. We see how incomplete these old ideas were; how almost by chance one seized on one nation, and another on another; how often one set of men have persecuted another set for opinions on subjects of which neither, we now perceive, knew anything. It might be well if a greater number of effectual demonstrations existed among mankind; but while no such demonstrations exist, and while the evidence which completely convinces one man seems to another trifling and insufficient, let us recognise the plain position of inevitable doubt. Let us not be bigots with a doubt, and persecutors without a creed. We are beginning to see this, and we are railed at for so beginning. But it is a great benefit, and it is to the incessant prevalence of detective discussion that our doubts are due; and much of that discussion is due to the long existence of a government requiring constant debates, written and oral.

This is one of the unrecognised benefits of free government, one of the modes in which it counteracts the excessive inherited impulses of humanity. There is another also for which it does the same, but which I can only touch delicately, and which at first sight will seem ridiculous. The most successful races, other things being equal, are those which multiply the fastest. In the conflicts of mankind numbers have ever been a great power. The most numerous group has always had an advantage over the less numerous, and the fastest breeding group has always tended to be the most numerous. In consequence, human nature has descended into a comparatively uncontem-

tious civilisation, with a desire far in excess of what is needed; with a "felt want," as political economists would say, altogether greater than the "real want". A walk in London is all which is necessary to establish this. "The great sin of great cities" is one vast evil consequent upon it. And who is to reckon up how much these words mean? How many spoiled lives, how many broken hearts, how many wasted bodies, how many ruined minds, how much misery pretending to be gay, how much gaiety feeling itself to be miserable, how much after mental pain, how much eating and transmitted disease. And in the moral part of the world, how many minds are racked by incessant anxiety, how many thoughtful imaginations which might have left something to mankind are debased to mean cares, how much every successive generation sacrifices to the next, how little does any of them make of itself in comparison with what might be. And how many Irelands have there been in the world where men would have been contented and happy if they had only been fewer; how many more Irelands would there have been if the intrusive numbers had not been kept down by infanticide and vice and misery. How painful is the conclusion that it is dubious whether all the machines and inventions of mankind "have yet lightened the day's labour of a human being". They have enabled more people to exist, but these people work just as hard and are just as mean and miserable as the elder and the fewer.

But it will be said of this passion just as it was said of the passion of activity. Granted that it is in excess, how can you say, how on earth can any one say, that government by discussion can in any way cure or diminish it? Cure this evil that government certainly will not; but tend to diminish it—I think it does and may. To show that I am not making premises to support a conclusion so abnormal, I will quote a passage from Mr. Spencer, the philosopher who has done most to illustrate this subject:—

"That future progress of civilisation which the never-ceasing pressure of population must produce, will be accompanied by an enhanced cost of Individuation, both in structure and function; and more especially in nervous structure and function.

The peaceful struggle for existence in societies ever growing more crowded and more complicated, must have for its concomitant an increase of the great nervous centres in mass, in complexity, in activity. The larger body of emotion needed as a fountain of energy for men who have to hold their places and rear their families under the intensifying competition of social life, is, other things equal, the correlative of larger brain. Those higher feelings presupposed by the better self-regulation which, in a better society, can alone enable the individual to leave a persistent posterity, are, other things equal, the correlatives of a more complex brain; as are also those more numerous, more varied, more general, and more abstract ideas, which must also become increasingly requisite for successful life as society advances. And the genesis of this larger quantity of feeling and thought in a brain thus augmented in size and developed in structure, is, other things equal, the correlative of a greater wear of nervous tissue and greater consumption of materials to repair it. So that both in original cost of construction and in subsequent cost of working, the nervous system must become a heavier tax on the organism. Already the brain of the civilised man is larger by nearly thirty per cent. than the brain of the savage. Already, too, it presents an increased heterogeneity—especially in the distribution of its convolutions. And further changes like these which have taken place under the discipline of civilised life, we infer will continue to take place. . . . But everywhere and always, evolution is antagonistic to procreative dissolution. Whether it be in greater growth of the organs which subserve self-maintenance, whether it be in their added complexity of structure, or whether it be in their higher activity, the abstraction of the required materials implies a diminished reserve of materials for race-maintenance. And we have seen reason to believe that this antagonism between Individuation and Genesis becomes unusually marked where the nervous system is concerned, because of the costliness of nervous structure and function. In § 346 was pointed out the apparent connection between high cerebral development and prolonged delay of sexual maturity; and in §§ 366, 367, the evidence went to show

that where exceptional fertility exists there is sluggishness of mind, and that where there has been during education excessive expenditure in mental action, there frequently follows a complete or partial infertility. Hence the particular kind of further evolution which Man is hereafter to undergo, is one which, more than any other, may be expected to cause a decline in his power of reproduction."

This means that men who have to live an intellectual life, or who can be induced to lead one, will be likely not to have so many children as they would otherwise have had. In particular cases this may not be true; such men may even have many children—they may be men in all ways of unusual power and vigour. But they will not have their maximum of posterity—will not have so many as they would have had if they had been careless or thoughtless men; and so, upon an average, the issue of such intellectualised men will be less numerous than those of the unintellectual.

Now, supposing this philosophical doctrine to be true—and the best philosophers, I think, believe it—its application to the case in hand is plain. Nothing promotes intellect like intellectual discussion, and nothing promotes intellectual discussion so much as government by discussion. The perpetual atmosphere of intellectual inquiry acts powerfully, as every one may see by looking about him in London, upon the constitution both of men and women. There is only a certain *quantum* of power in each of our race; if it goes in one way it is spent, and cannot go in another. The intellectual atmosphere abstracts strength to intellectual matters; it tends to divert that strength which the circumstances of early society directed to the multiplication of numbers; and as a polity of discussion tends, above all things, to produce an intellectual atmosphere, the two things which seemed so far off have been shown to be near, and free government has, in a second case, been shown to tend to cure an inherited excess of human nature.

Lastly, a polity of discussion not only tends to diminish our inherited defects, but also, in one case at least, to augment a heritable excellence. It tends to strengthen and increase a

subtle quality or combination of qualities singularly useful in practical life—a quality which it is not easy to describe exactly, and the issues of which it would require not a remnant of an essay, but a whole essay to elucidate completely. This quality I call ***animated moderation.***

If any one were asked to describe what it is which distinguishes the writings of a man of genius who is also a great man of the world from all other writings, I think he would use these same words, "animated moderation". He would say that such writings are never slow, are never excessive, are never exaggerated; that they are always instinct with judgment, and yet that judgment is never a dull judgment; that they have as much spirit in them as would go to make a wild writer, and yet that every line of them is the product of a sane and sound writer. The best and almost perfect instance of this in English is Scott. Homer was perfect in it, as far as we can judge; Shakespeare is often perfect in it for long together, though then, from the defects of a bad education and a vicious age, all at once he loses himself in excesses. Still, Homer, and Shakespeare at his best, and Scott, though in other respects so unequal to them, have this remarkable quality in common—this union of life with measure, of spirit with reasonableness.

In action it is equally this quality in which the English—at least so I claim it for them—excel all other nations. There is an infinite deal to be laid against us, and as we are unpopular with most others, and as we are always grumbling at ourselves, there is no want of people to say it. But, after all, in a certain sense, England is a success in the world; her career has had many faults, but still it has been a fine and winning career upon the whole. And this on account of the exact possession of this particular quality. What is the making of a successful merchant? That he has plenty of energy, and yet that he does not go too far. And if you ask for a description of a great practical Englishman, you will be sure to have this, or something like it, "Oh, he has plenty of go in him; but he knows when to pull up". He may have all other defects in him; he may be coarse, he may be illiterate, he may be stupid to talk to; still this great union of spur and bridle, of

energy and moderation, will remain to him. Probably he will hardly be able to explain why he stops when he does stop, or why he continued to move as long as he, in fact, moved; but still, as by a rough instinct, he pulls up pretty much where he should, though he was going at such a pace before.

There is no better example of this quality in English statesmen than Lord Palmerston. There are, of course, many most serious accusations to be made against him. The sort of homage with which he was regarded in the last years of his life has passed away; the spell is broken, and the magic cannot be again revived. We may think that his information was meagre, that his imagination was narrow, that his aims were short-sighted and faulty. But though we may often object to his objects, we rarely find much to criticise in his means. "He went," it has been said, "with a great swing;" but he never tumbled over; he always managed to pull up "before there was any danger". He was an odd man to have inherited Hampden's motto; still, in fact, there was a great trace in him of *mediocria firma*—as much, probably, as there could be in any one of such great vivacity and buoyancy.

It is plain that this is a quality which as much as, if not more than, any other multiplies good results in practical life. It enables men to see what is good; it gives them intellect enough for sufficient perception; but it does not make men all intellect; it does not "sickly them o'er with the pale cast of thought"; it enables them to do the good things they see to be good, as well as to see that they are good. And it is plain that a government by popular discussion tends to produce this quality. A strongly idiosyncratic mind, violently disposed to extremes of opinion, is soon weeded out of political life, and a bodiless thinker, an ineffectual scholar, cannot even live there for a day. A vigorous moderateness in mind and body is the rule of a polity which works by discussion; and, upon the whole, it is the kind of temper most suited to the active life of such a being as man in such a world as the present one.

These three great benefits of free government, though great, are entirely secondary to its continued usefulness in the mode in which it originally was useful. The first great bene-

fit was the deliverance of mankind from the superannuated yoke of customary law, by the gradual development of an inquisitive originality. And it continues to produce that effect upon persons apparently far remote from its influence, and on subjects with which it has nothing to do. Thus Mr. Mundella, a most experienced and capable judge, tells us that the English artisan, though so much less sober, less instructed, and less refined than the artisans of some other countries, is yet more inventive than any other artisan. The master will get more good suggestions from him than from any other.

Again, upon plausible grounds—looking, for example, to the position of Locke and Newton in the science of the last century, and to that of Darwin in our own—it may be argued that there is some quality in English thought which makes them strike out as many, if not more, first-rate and original suggestions than nations of greater scientific culture and more diffused scientific interest. In both cases I believe the reason of the English originality to be that government by discussion quickens and enlivens thought all through society; that it makes people think no harm may come of thinking; that in England this force has long been operating, and so it has developed more of all kinds of people ready to use their mental energy in their own way, and not ready to use it in any other way, than a despotic government. And so rare is great originality among mankind, and so great are its fruits, that this one benefit of free government probably outweighs what are in many cases its accessory evils. Of itself it justifies, or goes far to justify, our saying with Montesquieu, "Whatever be the cost of this glorious liberty, we must be content to pay it to heaven".

No. VI.

VERIFIABLE PROGRESS POLITICALLY CONSIDERED.

The original publication of these essays was interrupted by serious illness and by long consequent ill-health, and now that I am putting them together I wish to add another which shall shortly explain the main thread of the argument which they

contain. In doing so there is a risk of tedious repetition, but on a subject both obscure and important, any defect is better than an appearance of vagueness.

In a former essay I attempted to show that slighter causes than is commonly thought may change a nation from the stationary to the progressive state of civilisation, and from the stationary to the degrading. Commonly the effect of the agent is looked on in the wrong way. It is considered as operating on every individual in the nation, and it is assumed, or half-assumed, that it is only the effect which the agent directly produces on every one that need be considered. But besides this diffused effect of the first impact of the cause, there is a second effect, always considerable, and commonly more potent —a new *model* in character is created for the nation; those characters which resemble it are encouraged and multiplied; those contrasted with it are persecuted and made fewer. In a generation or two, the look of the nation becomes quite different; the characteristic men who stand out are different, the men imitated are different; the result of the imitation is different. A lazy nation may be changed into an industrious, a rich into a poor, a religious into a profane, as if by magic, if any single cause, though slight, or any combination of causes, however subtle, is strong enough to change the favourite and detested types of character.

This principle will, I think, help us in trying to solve the question why so few nations have progressed, though to us progress seems so natural—what is the cause or set of causes which have prevented that progress in the vast majority of cases, and produced it in the feeble minority. But there is a preliminary difficulty: What is progress, and what is decline? Even in the animal world there is no applicable rule accepted by physiologists, which settles what animals are higher or lower than others; there are controversies about it. Still more then in the more complex combinations and politics of human beings it is likely to be hard to find an agreed criterion for saying which nation is before another, or what age of a nation was marching forward and which was falling back. Archbishop Manning would have one rule of progress and

decline; Professor Huxley, in most important points, quite an opposite rule; what one would set down as an advance, the other would set down as a retreat. Each has a distinct end which he wishes and a distinct calamity which he fears, but the desire of the one is pretty near the fear of the other; books would not hold the controversy between them. Again, in art, who is to settle what is advance and what decline? Would Mr. Ruskin agree with any one else on this subject, would he even agree with himself or could any common inquirer venture to say whether he was right or wrong?

I am afraid that I must, as Sir Wm. Hamilton used to say, "truncate a problem which I cannot solve". I must decline to sit in judgment on disputed points of art, morals, or religion. But without so doing I think there is such a thing as "verifiable progress," if we may say so; that is, progress which ninety-nine hundredths or more of mankind will admit to be such, against which there is no established or organised opposition creed, and the objectors to which, essentially varying in opinion themselves, and believing one one thing and another the reverse, may be safely and altogether rejected.

Let us consider in what a village of English colonists is superior to a tribe of Australian natives who roam about them. Indisputably in one, and that a main sense, they are superior. They can beat the Australians in war when they like; they can take from them anything they like, and kill any of them they choose. As a rule, in all the outlying and uncontested districts of the world, the aboriginal native lies at the mercy of the intruding European. Nor is this all. Indisputably in the English village there are more means of happiness, a greater accumulation of the instruments of enjoyment, than in the Australian tribe. The English have all manner of books, utensils, and machines which the others do not use, value, or understand. And in addition, and beyond particular inventions, there is a general strength which is capable of being used in conquering a thousand difficulties, and is an abiding source of happiness, because those who possess it always feel that they can use it.

If we omit the higher but disputed topics of morals and

religion, we shall find, I think, that the plainer and agreed-on superiorities of the Englishmen are these: first, that they have a greater command over the powers of nature upon the whole. Though they may fall short of individual Australians in certain feats of petty skill, though they may not throw the boomerang as well, or light a fire with earthsticks as well, yet on the whole twenty Englishmen with their implements and skill can change the material world immeasurably more than twenty Australians and their machines. Secondly, that this power is not external only; it is also internal. The English not only possess better machines for moving nature, but are themselves better machines. Mr. Babbage taught us years ago that one great use of machinery was not to augment the force of man, but to register and regulate the power of man; and this in a thousand ways civilised man can do, and is ready to do, better and more precisely than the barbarian. Thirdly, civilised man not only has greater powers over nature, but knows better how to use them, and by better I here mean better for the health and comfort of his present body and mind. He can lay up for old age, which a savage having no durable means of sustenance cannot; he is ready to lay up because he can distinctly foresee the future, which the vague-minded savage cannot; he is mainly desirous of gentle, continuous pleasure, whereas the barbarian likes wild excitement, and longs for stupefying repletion. Much, if not all, of these three ways may be summed up in Mr. Spencer's phrase, that progress is an increase of adaptation of man to his environment, that is, of his internal powers and wishes to his external lot and life. Something of it too is expressed in the old pagan idea "mens sana in corpore sano". And I think this sort of progress may be fairly investigated quite separately, as it is progress in a sort of good every one worth reckoning with admits and agrees in. No doubt there will remain people like the aged savage, who in his old age went back to his savage tribe and said that he had "tried civilisation for forty years, and it was not worth the trouble". But we need not take account of the mistaken ideas of unfit men and beaten races. On the whole the plainer sort of civilisation, the simpler moral training, and the more elementary education are plain

benefits. And though there may be doubt as to the edges of the conception yet there certainly is a broad road of "verifiable progress" which not only discoverers and admirers will like, but which all those who come upon it will use and value.

Unless some kind of abstraction like this is made in the subject the great problem "What causes progress?" will, I am confident, long remain unsolved. Unless we are content to solve simple problems first, the whole history of philosophy teaches that we shall never solve hard problems. This is the maxim of scientific humility so often insisted on by the highest inquirers that, in investigations, as in life, those "who exalt themselves shall be abased, and those who humble themselves shall be exalted"; and though we may seem mean only to look for the laws of plain comfort and simple present happiness, yet we must work out that simple case first, before we encounter the incredibly harder additional difficulties of the higher art, morals and religion.

The difficulty of solving the problem even thus limited is exceedingly great. The most palpable facts are exactly the contrary to what we should expect. Lord Macaulay tells us that "In every experimental science there is a tendency towards perfection. In every human being there is a tendency to ameliorate his condition;" and these two principles operating everywhere and always, might well have been expected to "carry mankind rapidly forward". Indeed, taking verifiable progress in the sense which has just been given to it, we may say that nature gives a prize to every single step in it. Every one that makes an invention that benefits himself or those around him, is likely to be more comfortable himself and to be more respected by those around him. To produce new things "serviceable to man's life and conducive to man's estate," is, we should say, likely to bring increased happiness to the producer. It often brings immense reward certainly now; a new form of good steel pen, a way of making some kind of clothes a little better or a little cheaper, have brought men great fortunes. And there is the same kind of prize for industrial improvement in the earliest times as in the latest; though the benefits so obtainable in early society are poor indeed in

comparison with those of advanced society. Nature is like a schoolmaster, at least in this, she gives her finest prizes to her high and most instructed classes. Still, even in the earliest society, nature helps those who can help themselves, and helps them very much.

All this should have made the progress of mankind—progress at least in this limited sense—exceedingly common; but, in fact, any progress is extremely rare. As a rule (and as has been insisted on before) a stationary state is by far the most frequent condition of man, as far as history describes that condition; the progressive state is only a rare and an occasional exception.

Before history began there must have been in the nation which writes it much progress; else there could have been no history. It is a great advance in civilisation to be able to describe the common facts of life, and perhaps, if we were to examine it, we should find that it was at least an equal advance to wish to describe them. But very few races have made this step of progress; very few have been capable even of the meanest sort of history; and as for writing such a history as that of Thucydides, most nations could as soon have constructed a planet. When history begins to record, she finds most of the races incapable of history, arrested, unprogressive, and pretty much where they are now.

Why, then, have not the obvious and natural causes of progress (as we should call them) produced those obvious and natural effects? Why have the real fortunes of mankind been so different from the fortunes which we should expect? This is the problem which in various forms I have taken up in these papers, and this is the outline of the solution which I have attempted to propose.

The progress of *man* requires the co-operation of *men* for its development. That which any one man or any one family could invent for themselves is obviously exceedingly limited. And even if this were not true, isolated progress could never be traced. The rudest sort of co-operative society, the lowest tribe and the feeblest Government, is so much stronger than isolated man, that isolated man (if he ever existed in any

shape which could be called man), might very easily have ceased to exist. The first principle of the subject is that man can only make progress in "co-operative groups"; I might say tribes and nations, but I use the less common word because few people would at once see that tribes and nations *are* co-operative groups, and that it is their being so which makes their value; that unless you can make a strong co-operative bond, your society will be conquered and killed out by some other society which has such a bond; and the second principle is that the members of such a group should be similar enough to one another to co-operate easily and readily together. The co-operation in all such cases depends on a *felt union* of heart and spirit; and this is only felt when there is a great degree of real likeness in mind and feeling, however that likeness may have been attained.

This needful co-operation and this requisite likeness I believe to have been produced by one of the strongest yokes (as we should think if it were to be reimposed now) and the most terrible tyrannies ever known among men—the authority of "customary law". In its earlier stage this is no pleasant power—no "rose-water" authority, as Carlyle would have called it—but a stern, incessant, implacable rule. And the rule is often of most childish origin, beginning in a casual superstition or local accident. "These people," says Captain Palmer of the Fiji, "are very conservative. A chief was one day going over a mountain-path followed by a long string of his people, when he happened to stumble and fall; all the rest of the people immediately did the same except one man, who was set upon by the rest to know whether he considered himself better than the chief." What can be worse than a life regulated by that sort of obedience, and that sort of imitation? This is, of course, a bad specimen, but the nature of customary law as we everywhere find it in its earliest stages is that of coarse casual comprehensive usage, beginning, we cannot tell how, deciding, we cannot tell why, but ruling every one in almost every action with an inflexible grasp.

The necessity of thus forming co-operative groups by fixed customs explains the necessity of isolation in early society.

As a matter of fact all great nations have been prepared in privacy and in secret. They have been composed far away from all distraction. Greece, Rome, Judæa, were framed each by itself, and the antipathy of each to men of different race and different speech is one of their most marked peculiarities, and quite their strongest common property. And the instinct of early ages is a right guide for the needs of early ages. Intercourse with foreigners then broke down in states the fixed rules which were forming their characters, so as to be a cause of weak fibre of mind, of desultory and unsettled action; the living spectacle of an admitted unbelief destroys the binding authority of religious custom and snaps the social cord.

Thus we see the use of a sort of "preliminary" age in societies, when trade is bad because it prevents the separation of nations, because it infuses distracting ideas among occupied communities, because it "brings alien minds to alien shores". And as the trade which we now think of as an incalculable good, is in that age a formidable evil and destructive calamity; so war and conquest, which we commonly and justly see to be now evils, are in that age often singular benefits and great advantages. It is only by the competition of customs that bad customs can be eliminated and good customs multiplied. Conquest is the premium given by nature to those national characters which their national customs have made most fit to win in war, and in many most material respects those winning characters are really the best characters. The characters which do win in war are the characters which we should wish to win in war.

Similarly, the best institutions have a natural military advantage over bad institutions. The first great victory of civilisation was the conquest of nations with ill-defined families having legal descent through the mother only, by nations of definite families tracing descent through the father as well as the mother, or through the father only. Such compact families are a much better basis for military discipline than the ill-bound families which indeed seem hardly to be families at all, where "paternity" is, for tribal purposes, an unrecognised idea, and where only the physical fact of "maternity" is thought to be

certain enough to be the foundation of law or custom. The nations with a thoroughly compacted family system have "possessed the earth," that is, they have taken all the finest districts in the most competed-for parts; and the nations with loose systems have been merely left to mountain ranges and lonely islands. The family system and that in its highest form has been so exclusively the system of civilisation, that literature hardly recognises any other, and that, if it were not for the living testimony of a great multitude of scattered communities which are "fashioned after the structure of the elder world," we should hardly admit the possibility of something so contrary to all which we have lived amongst, and which we have been used to think of. After such an example of the fragmentary nature of the evidence it is in comparison easy to believe that hundreds of strange institutions may have passed away and have left behind them not only no memorial, but not even a trace or a vestige to help the imagination to figure what they were.

I cannot expand the subject, but in the same way the better religions have had a great physical advantage, if I may say so, over the worse. They have given what I may call a *confidence in the universe.* The savage subjected to a mean superstition, is afraid to walk simply about the world—he cannot do *this* because it is ominous, or he must do *that* because it is lucky, or he cannot do anything at all till the gods have spoken and given him leave to begin. But under the higher religions there is no similar slavery and no similar terror. The belief of the Greek

εἷς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος, ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πάτρης

the belief of the Roman that he was to trust in the gods of Rome, for those gods were stronger than all others; the belief of Cromwell's soldiery that they were "to trust in God and keep their powder dry," are great steps in upward progress, using progress in its narrowest sense. They all enabled those who believed them "to take the world as it comes," to be guided by no unreal reason, and to be limited by no mystic scruple; whenever they found anything to do, to do it with

their might. And more directly what I may call the *fortifying* religions, that is to say, those which lay the plainest stress on the manly parts of morality—upon valour, on truth and industry—have had plainly the most obvious effect in strengthening the races which believed them, and in making those races the winning races.

No doubt many sorts of primitive improvement are pernicious to war; an exquisite sense of beauty, a love of meditation, a tendency to cultivate the force of the mind at the expense of the force of the body, for example, help in their respective degrees to make men less warlike than they would otherwise be. But these are the virtues of other ages. The first work of the first ages is to bind men together in the strong bond of a rough, coarse, harsh custom; and the incessant conflict of nations effects this in the best way. Every nation is an "hereditary co-operative group," bound by a fixed custom; and out of those groups those conquer which have the most binding and most invigorating customs, and these are, as a rough rule, the best customs. The majority of the "groups" which win and conquer are better than the majority of those which fail and perish, and thus the first world grew better and was improved.

This early customary world no doubt continued for ages. The first history delineates great monarchies, each composed of a hundred customary groups, all of which believed themselves to be of enormous antiquity, and all of which must have existed for very many generations. The first historical world is not a new-looking thing but a very ancient, and according to principle it is necessary that it should exist for ages. If human nature was to be gradually improved, each generation must be born better tamed, more calm, more capable of civilisation—in a word, more *legal* than the one before it, and such inherited improvements are always slow and dubious. Though a few gifted people may advance much, the mass of each generation can improve but very little on the generation which preceded it; and even the slight improvement so gained is liable to be destroyed by some mysterious atavism—some strange recurrence to a primitive past. Long ages of dreary monotony are the first facts in the history of human communities, but those

ages were not lost to mankind, for it was then that was formed the comparatively gentle and guidable thing which we now call human nature.

And indeed the greatest difficulty is not in preserving such a world but in ending it. We have brought in the yoke of custom to improve the world, and in the world the custom sticks. In a thousand cases—in the great majority of cases—the progress of mankind has been arrested in this its earliest shape; it has been closely embalmed in a mummy-like imitation of its primitive existence. I have endeavoured to show in what manner, and how slowly, and in how few cases this yoke of custom was removed. It was "government by discussion" which broke the bond of ages and set free the originality of mankind. Then, and then only, the motives which Lord Macaulay counted on to secure the progress of mankind, in fact, begin to work; *then* "the tendency in every man to ameliorate his condition" begins to be important, because then man can alter his condition while before he is pegged down by ancient usage; *then* the tendency in each mechanical art towards perfection begins to have force, because the artist is at last allowed to seek perfection, after having been forced for ages to move in the straight furrow of the old fixed way.

As soon as this great step upwards is once made, all or almost all, the higher gifts and graces of humanity have a rapid and a definite effect on "verifiable progress"—on progress in the narrowest, because in the most universally admitted sense of the term. Success in life, then, depends, as we have seen, more than anything else on "animated moderation," on a certain combination of energy of mind and balance of mind, hard to attain and harder to keep. And this subtle excellence is aided by all the finer graces of humanity. It is a matter of common observation that, though often separated, fine taste and fine judgment go very much together, and especially that a man with gross want of taste, though he may act sensibly and correctly for a while, is yet apt to break out, sooner or later, into gross practical error. In metaphysics, probably both taste and judgment involve what is termed "poise of mind," that is the power of true passiveness—the faculty of "waiting" till the

stream of impressions, whether those of life or those of art have done all that they have to do, and cut their full type plainly upon the mind. The ill-judging and the untasteful are both over-eager; both move too quick and blur the image. In this way the union between a subtle sense of beauty and a subtle discretion in conduct is a natural one, because it rests on the common possession of a fine power, though, in matter of fact, that union may be often disturbed. A complex sea of forces and passions troubles men in life and action, which in the calmer region of art are hardly to be felt at all. And, therefore, the cultivation of a fine taste tends to promote the function of a fine judgment, which is a main help in the complex world of civilised existence. Just so too the manner in which the more delicate parts of religion daily work in producing that "moderation" which, upon the whole, and as a rule, is essential to long success, defining success even in its most narrow and mundane way, might be worked out in a hundred cases, though it would not suit these pages. Many of the finer intellectual tastes have a similar restraining effect; they prevent, or tend to prevent, a greedy voracity after the good things of life, which makes both men and nations in excessive haste to be rich and famous, often makes them do too much and do it ill, and so often leaves them at last without money and without respect.

But there is no need to expand this further. The principle is plain that, though these better and higher graces of humanity are impediments and encumbrances in the early fighting period, yet that in the later era they are among the greatest helps and benefits, and that as soon as governments by discussion have become strong enough to secure a stable existence, and as soon as they have broken the fixed rule of old custom, and have awakened the dormant inventiveness of men, then, for the first time, almost every part of human nature begins to spring forward, and begins to contribute its quota even to the narrowest, even to "verifiable" progress. And this is the true reason of all those panegyrics on liberty which are often so measured in expression but are in essence so true to life and nature. Liberty is the strengthening and developing power—the light and heat of political nature; and when some "Cæsarism" exhibits as it

sometimes will an originality of mind, it is only because it has managed to make its own the products of past free times or neighbouring free countries; and even that originality is only brief and frail, and after a little while, when tested by a generation or two, in time of need it falls away.

In a complete investigation of all the conditions of "verifiable progress," much else would have to be set out; for example, science has secrets of her own. Nature does not wear her most useful lessons on her sleeve; she only yields her most productive secrets, those which yield the most wealth and the most "fruit," to those who have gone through a long process of preliminary abstraction. To make a person really understand the "laws of motion" is not easy, and to solve even simple problems in abstract dynamics is to most people exceedingly hard. And yet it is on these out-of-the-way investigations, so to speak, that the art of navigation, all physical astronomy, and all the theory of physical movements at last depend. But no nation would beforehand have thought that in so curious a manner such great secrets were to be discovered. And many nations, therefore, which get on the wrong track, may be distanced—supposing there to be no communication—by some nation not better than any of them which happens to stumble on the right track. If there were no "Bradshaw" and no one knew the time at which trains started, a man who caught the express would not be a wiser or a more business-like man than he who missed it, and yet he would arrive whole hours sooner at the capital both are going to. And unless I misread the matter, such was often the case with early knowledge. At any rate before a complete theory of "verifiable progress" could be made, it would have to be settled whether this is so or not, and the conditions of the development of physical science would have to be fully stated; obviously you cannot explain the development of human comfort unless you know the way in which men learn and discover comfortable things. Then again, for a complete discussion, whether of progress or degradation, a whole course of analysis is necessary as to the effect of natural agencies on man, and of change in those agencies. But upon these I cannot touch; the only way to

solve these great problems is to take them separately. I only profess to explain what seem to me the political prerequisites of progress, and especially of early progress. I do this the rather because the subject is insufficiently examined, so that even if my views are found to be faulty, the discussion upon them may bring out others which are truer and better.

ARTICLE I.—THE CURRENCY MONOPOLY.

(*From "The Prospective Review," 1848. First essay published by Walter Bagehot.*)

1. *Capital, Currency, and Banking;* being a collection of a Series of Articles published in the *Economist* in 1845, on the Principles of the Bank Charter Act of 1844, and in 1847, on the Recent Monetarial and Commercial Crisis, concluding with a Plan for a Secure and Economical Currency.
2. *The Principles and Practical Operation of Sir R. Peel's Bill explained and defended against the Objections of Tooke, Fullarton, and Wilson.* By R. Torrens, F.R.S.
3. *A History of Prices and of the State of the Circulation from* 1839 to 1847 *inclusive; with a general Review of the Currency Question, and Remarks on the Operation of the Act* 7 *and* 8 *Vict., c.* 32. By Thomas Tooke, Esq., F.R.S.

NOT only do the circumstances of the recent mercantile crisis naturally create an interest in the subject of currency, but there is also a deeper and a more permanent reason why it should occupy the minds of those who live in the present age. It cannot be denied that the success of the Free Trade agitation in England has now familiarised the majority of educated Englishmen with a scheme of political doctrine which at any previous time would have been deemed, to say the least, eccentric and paradoxical. Almost all in any other generation would have regarded even the characteristic truths of the *laissez-faire* system as utterly strange and incredible; and even the most far-seeing would have thought its characteristic errors too futile to need a detailed refutation. In our time, however, it has been clearly and convincingly argued, that when no blinding passion prevents individuals from discerning what is their greatest pecuniary interest; when their pecuniary interest coincides with that of the nation at large; and when also the pecuniary interest of the nation is co-

incident with its highest interests and highest duties,—the welfare of the nation will be better promoted by leaving every man to the exercise of his own unfettered discretion, than by laying down a general legislative rule for the observance of all. We do not think that when the boundaries of the argument are thus guarded and defined, the proof of the *laissez-faire* system can rightfully be gainsaid. To us it appears evident that a Government cannot exercise that minute inspection of details, and will not devote to them that continuous attention, which are essential to the success of trading speculations: nor even if the whole detail of cases were laid before them, have the habits of rulers in general trained them for coming to a decision so correct as that of mercantile men: nor, what is more to the point than all, can any law drawn up in vague and general language supply a universally beneficial rule for the multifarious and ever-varying operations of commerce. From an habitual contemplation of these truths, a sentiment of dislike to the interference of Government has grown up in the minds of money-making men: those of them especially who have most accurately studied the machinery by which capital and labour are transmitted to their most profitable employment are prone to speak contemptuously of Government interference as though it were proposed that those who were wholly ignorant of the construction of a nicely adjusted machine should have the discretionary privilege of placing a clog upon its working. This sentiment is useful and healthy when confined to its legitimate function, *viz.* when watching that Government does not assume to know what will bring a trader in money better than he knows it himself; but it is a sentiment very susceptible of hurtful exaggeration: in the minds of many at this day it stands opposed to the enforcement of a moral law throughout the *whole* sphere of human acts susceptible of attestation: to the legislative promotion of those industrial habits which conduce to the attainment of national morality or national happiness at a sacrifice of national wealth: to efforts at a national education, or a compulsory sanatory reform: to all national aid from England towards the starving peasantry of Ireland:

to every measure for improving the condition of that peasantry which would not be the spontaneous choice of the profit-hunting capitalist. Whoever speaks against these extreme opinions is sure to be sneered at as a "benevolent sentimentalist": and economists are perpetually assuming that the notion of Government interference is agreeable only to those whose hearts are more developed than their brains: who are too fond of poetic dreams to endure the stern realities of science. Under these circumstances, the opponents of the *laissez-faire* system will be interested to inquire whether there be no exception to it within the limits of Political Economy itself; whether instances cannot be found where the pecuniary interest of individuals, though not guiding them to actions morally wrong, does nevertheless come into collision both with the pecuniary and with the real interest of the nation; where the sedulous attention of a Government is needed to guard the elaborate machinery of national industry against the disturbing agency of individual selfishness. Such a subject, according to an immense preponderance of authority, according to the almost universal belief of the greatest nations, is the subject of currency. The vast majority of nations have vested in the hands of Government the monopoly of what in the hands of individuals would be a lucrative branch of industry, *viz.* the trade of coining metallic money. The progress of opinion in this country has during the last few years sensibly tended towards following the example of several continental nations, and giving to Government, of course with due respect to vested interests, the monopoly also of the issue of paper money. In the following essay it is proposed, after a brief preliminary notice of the books before us, to indicate the grounds upon which we believe that there is a great wisdom in acknowledging this exception to the principles of Free Trade: to defend the practice of confining to Government both the coining of the precious metals, and, as far as possible, the utterance of money destitute of intrinsic value: and also to notice some interesting points of currency theory which incidentally arise in the progress of the discussion, and which are treated of at length in the works under review.

These works have all arisen out of the terrible monetary crisis of 1847, and for their main and characteristic object to decide whether it were alleviated, caused, or aggravated by the Bank Bill passed at the instance of Sir R. Peel in 1844. This measure had a fourfold purpose: it was designed to limit to 14,000,000 sterling the amount of paper money issuable by the Bank of England on securities; to divide the Bank of England into two Departments, in one of which, called the *Issue* Department, there should be bullion for all bank notes over and above the before-mentioned 14,000,000, either in the till of the other or *Banking* Department, or in the hands of the trading public of England; thirdly, to preclude the existing country banks of issue from going beyond the issue of a certain maximum of notes founded on a particular average of the previous circulation of each; fourthly, to provide against the establishment of any new banks of issue, and for the substitution of Bank of England paper in the room of the circulation of any existing banks who may consent to it. This Act is clearly an approach to the principle of a Government monopoly of paper money: most obviously by its last provision, but not less by the constitution of a separate Issue Department, which as a mere piece of mechanism to keep bullion in reserve to represent notes in circulation, and to give bullion in exchange for them on demand, is beyond the control of Bank Directors, and might as well be in the hands of National Commissioners appointed by the Crown. Under this law the monetary affairs of the country were transacted, until October 25, 1847, when a letter from Lord John Russell and the Chancellor of the Exchequer empowered the Bank of England "to enlarge the amount of their discounts and advances upon approved security," at the rate of 8 per cent., at the risk of an extraordinary issue of bank notes unrepresented by bullion; thus abolishing *pro tempore* that portion of Sir R. Peel's Bill which limited the amount of notes not represented by bullion in the Issue Department. On this measure, and on the deviation from it, there is every kind of difference of opinion; but those most entitled to respect are adequately represented by the three works at the head of this Article.

Mr. Wilson, the editor of the *Economist*, has here embodied in a permanent form several very able and instructive articles, first published in that newspaper during last year. He is a decided opponent of the Bill of 1844, and in his own words "has never been able to discover any good ground for the objections which appear to exist in the minds of a portion of even the most uncompromising free traders against the application of the same principles to banking, and *especially* to notes payable on demand". He enumerates five assumptions which, he thinks, are contained in the Act of 1844; and professes to refute them at great length. These are, first, that bank notes, though payable in coin at the option of the holder, are still liable to be issued in excess, and are consequently subject to depreciation. Secondly, that convertibility of notes into coin at the pleasure of the holder alone is not a sufficient guarantee that a mixed currency of bank notes and coin shall conform in its variations to the same laws which regulate a purely metallic currency. Thirdly, that issuers of notes have power to increase or decrease the circulation at pleasure. Fourthly, that by an expansion or contraction of the issue of bank notes at pleasure, the prices of commodities can be increased and diminished. Fifthly, that by such an increase or diminution of prices, the foreign exchanges can be corrected, and an undue efflux or influx of bullion, as the case may be, corrected.[1] Beside this elaborate attempt at the refutation of the principles of Sir R. Peel, Mr. Wilson has given us a dissertation on the distinction which he draws between capital and circulation, on the difference between floating and circulating capital, on railways, and on the principles of banking; so that the work forms altogether a very complete discussion of the causes which are asserted to have produced the crisis of 1847. On each of the five propositions which Mr. Wilson has enumerated, we shall be obliged to say something hereafter: they are evidently most material in deciding on the rule by which the issuer or issuers, whoever they may be, are

[1] These five assumptions ought to be only *four*; because Mr. Wilson admits that, if the third is granted, the fourth follows. Mr. Fullarton also thinks the inference legitimate.

to be guided in the management of the circulating medium. We do not imagine that his objections invalidate the essential argumentative supports of the Act of 1844; but we are quite ready to concede that he has effectually demolished certain outworks which had been reared by the excessive zeal of incautious defenders. We may be excused for remarking that we much wish that the book had been submitted to an attentive revision. There are, we think, many inaccurate expressions which would pass in a newspaper without occasioning either remark or mistake, but which occasion perplexity and even error when submitted in a permanent work to the eyes of attentive students and acute opponents. Mr. Wilson concludes with a plan of his own for a secure and economical currency; the principal feature of which is a "substitution" of one pound notes for sovereigns, with the view of obtaining a convenient purchase-money for the foreign corn imported last year.

Colonel Torrens' pamphlet (if 177 pages do not make a book of too great magnitude for a name so trivial) shows in the strongest light the peculiar talents of its author. Although long, in consequence of the number of the subjects which it discusses, it is by no means prolix or diffuse; for the style is marked by that distinctness and precision which characterise a writer who has a clear and scientific acquaintance with the subject which he handles. No English economist with whose works we are acquainted has at all equalled Colonel Torrens in the literary skilfulness which results in the emphatic statement of abstract truths.[1] His well-known controversial ability has never been more strikingly displayed than in his present production. He has been thoroughly roused by the objections to the principles of the Act of 1844, of which he is the greatest theoretical expounder; and he has the advantage of contending against adversaries more eminent for diligence, good sense,

[1] Mr. Loyd, the great practical expounder of the principles of Sir R. Peel, has explained the less theoretical parts of the subject with greater clearness than Colonel Torrens, and has dilated on some parts of the subject with an eloquence unexampled in currency pamphlets, and admirably adapted to the subject.

and acquaintance with the actual course of business, than for the faculty of scientific abstraction. Colonel Torrens is not, however, so great a worshipper of the Act of 1844 as to disapprove of the interposition of Ministers in October last. On the other hand, he regards this Act of the Government as a masterpiece of political sagacity, conceived with great speculative ability, and executed with first-rate practical dexterity, neither begun too early nor deferred too late.

Mr. Tooke's book cannot be looked on as a masterpiece of literary skill. It is swollen with quotations which those who are interested in the subject will most probably have read in the works from which they are selected, and which will not always be intelligible to those who meet them here for the first time. The style is prolix and diffuse; very different from what the author of the London petition of 1820 and the previous volumes of the *History of Prices* has at times shown himself capable of. But Mr. Tooke claims respectful attention on grounds which allow him to sacrifice the attractions of verbal elegance. He began his career as an economical author, many years ago, by writing in defence of the currency doctrines maintained by Ricardo and the Bullionists of 1810; but by a more detailed attention to the condition of England from 1793 to 1839 he was led first to modify, and afterwards to discard, this celebrated scheme of economical theory. At the present time this circumstance is particularly important, because the principles of the Bill of 1844 are, according both to friends and opponents, logically correct deductions from the tenets of Ricardo. Mr. Tooke's own substitute for these views has been embodied for some years in the *History of Prices*, of which the work before us is the concluding volume.

It will be more convenient to describe these new speculations in connection with those parts of the subject to which they particularly refer. We are not prepared, with Colonel Torrens, to designate the *History of Prices* as "the most illogical work which has ever been contributed to the world on a scientific subject": but we are still less ready to hail Mr. Tooke as the discoverer of principles that will supersede everything yet advanced upon the subject of currency. He

appears to us simply an able and industrious collector of facts, who has done a great service to Political Economy by a narrative of the rise and fall of English prices during the present century. He does not appear to us to understand what are the *necessary* supports of the theory on which the Act of 1844 is grounded. He continually alleges facts as "obvious disproofs" of that theory which, in reality, are perfectly consistent with it, and seem to us sometimes confirmatory of it. Mr. Tooke is a much more violent opponent of the principles of Sir R. Peel's Bill than Mr. Wilson. It will go down to posterity in this volume of the *History of Prices* that the interference of Ministers with the working of that Act in October last was a manifest indication of utter falsity of principle, and that the Act itself has been "*a total, unmitigated, uncompensated*, and, in its consequences, a *lamentable* failure". The greatest cause of the diversity of opinion prevailing on the subject of currency, and conspicuous even in the books which we have just described, is an indistinct conception of the circumstances affecting exchangeable value. Money is, for commercial purposes, the standard of value, and no one ought to wonder that mistakes as to value itself may cause that which measures it to be misapplied. A few words, therefore, on elementary principles will not be thrown away if they clear from the minds of *any*, misconceptions as to the fundamental truths on which almost all political economy is grounded. In doing this, we shall follow the rule of science and common sense, by considering first the most simple cases, and then advancing to those more complicated; first computing the effects due to the principal and constant causes, and then going on to the consideration of secondary and disturbing agencies. We may state that in our judgment, there is a *consensus* of economists for what we shall advance: particular writers, as Mr. Tooke and Mr. Wilson, take exception to particular tenets; but the prevailing course of teaching, as exhibited in the writings of the most accomplished economists, tends to a united belief in the proposition we are about to maintain. As the simplest possible mode of conducting mercantile business is by barter, we are met at the threshold

of Political Economy by the question much discussed some thirty years ago—*viz.* what, under this simple system, regulates exchangeable value. The doctrine generally received at present, and, as we think, the true one, is as follows: the price universally is regulated by the quantity brought to market, and the demand for it; by the scarcity of the article, and its utility: that is, by its scarcity, and by that power of satisfying human wants of which the market-demand is the sole attainable evidence. Hence it is assumed as an axiomatic truth that articles equally in demand, exchange one against another inversely as their supply: and articles of which the supply is the same, exchange one against another in direct proportion to the demand. But it is obvious that these causes, *viz.* demand and supply, cannot, in the case of articles capable of being produced in indefinite quantity by human labour, be an ultimate regulator of exchangeable value. The supply of such articles is not a simple casualty: men have some motive for producing when they do produce, and for ceasing when they cease; and this motive it is the business of Political Economists who have in view the discovery of the mental laws affecting the Production as well as the Consumption of wealth, to exhibit with clearness and fulness. Nor in all ordinary cases is that motive hard to seek: since those articles exchange one against another which are equally in supply and equally in demand, it is obviously the interest of every man to supply that one among equally desired articles which he can supply with the greatest ease. Hence, cases of monopoly excepted, articles which it is easy to produce will be supplied in inverse proportion to their cost of production; because producers will flock to those branches of trade which are attended by an extra facility of production: and will keep clear of those where there is an extra difficulty. And therefore it appears as a final result, that in all pursuits open to unlimited competition, articles for which the demand is the same will have an exchangeable value directly proportioned to their cost of production: that is, to the labour and capital expended upon bringing them to market. It is important to call attention to the fact that this result is brought about by

alterations in the *quantity* of articles offered for sale, so that diminution of the cost of production would cause a fall in exchangeable value; until producers shall have suited themselves to the new state of circumstances, and until a general increase in the quantity of the commodity throughout all its uses and all its products shall have so glutted the market as to render it too abundant to bear its old value.

A speculative thinker would expect to find that the main course of trade would not be much altered after the improvement superinduced upon the system of barter by the introduction of a general instrument of interchange under the name of money. When men find out an instrument to facilitate the performance of any work, they will generally take care not to overlook the end in a superfluous anxiety about the means. Mankind are a race of beings wiser in action than in speech: the mass of energetic intelligence which is concentrated on the industrious occupations of practical life, though unrepresented in books and often undervalued by literary men, will generally keep mere instruments in due subservience to their ultimate ends. So it is obviously with metallic money. Gold does not cease to have its value determined as before because everything is purchased with it, and all debts are paid in it. Though a convenient it is a misleading expression to speak of the state of barter as having ceased; in point of fact, gold is bartered for everything and everything is bartered for gold. Just as in the state of things before the introduction of money to expedite the transfer of commodities, a diminution in the cost of production is followed by an increase in the quantity of it that is brought to market, and consequently by a reduction of value. Everybody, in plain English, could have it more easily: the supply of it would increase: the quantity of it made into plate would be greater, and the value of plate less: the quantity made into sovereigns would be increased, and the purchasing power of sovereigns would be diminished. And here it is important to remark that it is an increase in the amount of the circulating medium that raises the prices which are estimated in that medium: that the quantity of money in circulation is the cause of that rise, and not the consequence of it: that a

facility in obtaining the medium of interchange raises the price when measured in that medium. Nor will the case be altered when bullion is imported from foreign countries: an influx of bullion will cause an additional quantity to be made both of plate and sovereigns: by causing that increase of quantity it will also cause a diminution in their purchasing power. Nor is the case altered by the foundation of banks of deposit. The necessity of these arises thus: every man has to keep a certain amount of coin ready to meet demands upon him: "Money," says Aristotle, "is barren": no man gets a profit on what is in his till; and a natural desire arises in consequence to reduce its amount to the minimum consistent with safety and solvency. This desire is partially satisfied by an offer from a person whose respectable character and pecuniary means afford the public what they think an adequate guarantee for his not becoming insolvent, to receive the superfluous cash of individuals, and to pay it back either upon demand or upon the receipt of a certain notice. A part of this money he lends out again, at a profit to himself; a part he holds as a reserve to meet demands upon him.

Now under the influence of a cheapening of bullion it appears that both the money in the hands of the public and in the bankers' reserve will increase. Sovereigns and plate, as we so often say, will be multiplied, and wherever either is used there will be an increased supply of them. It is a very secondary question whether, with Colonel Torrens, we shall say that money in bankers' reserve is in circulation, or, with Mr. Wilson, confine that appellation to money in the hands of persons not bankers. Mr. Wilson's distinction seems to us very arbitrary:[1] the reserve of money is an equivalent for a larger amount, which if there had been no banks of deposit

[1] Mr. Wilson appears to have been misled by not observing the difference between reserves held against circulation and reserves held to pay back deposits when called for. The former do not lessen the amount of circulation in the hands of the public, which is the essential characteristic of the latter. To reckon the former as circulation is reckoning the same sum twice over, and make out that the use of a representative medium increases permanently the amount of money in use throughout a country.

would have been in the hands of the public; if the keeping one-fifth of the currency of a country in a bankers' reserve enables it to dispense with the employment of two-fifths, it seems confusing to apply the name circulation to the three-fifths in previous use, and not to apply it to the one-fifth which is substituted for them. What renders the difference of opinion important is the doctrine of the exchanges. When there is an influx of bullion, the exchange is, in conformity with certain old mercantile superstitions, called favourable, and also unfavourable when there is an export of bullion. Now the theory of Sir R. Peel's bill assumes that with the influx of bullion there would be an increase in the quantity of a purely metallic circulation, because as a rule that influx would be attended with a cheapening of bullion, and *mutatis mutandis* a similar proposition is thought to hold if an efflux. Also it is stated as a fact of experience, that drains of bullion, for the purpose of supplying an adverse exchange, act first on the reserves of bankers; and Mr. Wilson reasons that these reserves are *not* circulation, and that, as the drain acts on them, the circulation is not reduced by it; and he believes himself to have thus overthrown a material support to the Act of 1844. Even, however, if it were admitted that the drain acted *only* on the reserves, we should answer that they were as much in circulation in the till of the banker as in the till of a merchant: but we altogether doubt if a drain could act on them only. A reserve in general ought to bear a fixed proportion, say a third, to the deposits which it is kept to meet: if a half of the reserve were drawn out, the deposits would evidently be reduced only a sixth, and the reserve would only be one-fifth of the deposits. A prudent banker would, in such a case, increase his money reserve by the sale of securities and an abstraction of the proceeds from the money in the hands of the general public. On the whole we cannot but regret that Mr. Wilson should have suffered a point of detail like this to obscure his perception of the principle that an influx of bullion will be attended by a cheapening of bullion: and that the latter will, when the number of monetary transactions has undergone no diminution, be accompanied by an increase of

circulation. We quite concede to Mr. Wilson that it may happen that the transactions of the country may be simultaneously diminished with an import of bullion and increased simultaneously with an export. The amount of transactions depends of course on the amount of commodities in the country and on the wish to interchange them. Circumstances could no doubt be imagined, which might, by affecting these, reduce the mercantile business of the country, just when bullion was fast flowing into the country; but this admission obviously does not affect the principle which we have here advanced. It is also proper to remark, that we have been all along speaking of a purely metallic currency, where all barter was extinct, and all bargains were effected by the passage of so much coin from hand to hand. We are quite willing to concede to Mr. Wilson, that if any remains of a system of barter should have lingered long after the rest of it was abandoned, and if this last remnant of the primitive state of things were swept away during an adverse exchange and an efflux of bullion, an increase in the circulation of a purely metallic currency will be coincident with a foreign drain of bullion. As Mr. Wilson himself remarks in a recent number of the *Economist*, the downfall of the conacre system, and the introduction of money wages into many parts of Ireland, may have last year rendered necessary an increase of Irish silver currency, although there was simultaneously a drain of bullion from the whole United Kingdom to pay for foreign corn.

It is obvious that the introduction of a metallic currency induces the practices of estimating the prices of articles in money, or, as it is phrased, makes money the standard of value.

On this account it very early became necessary to know what amount of gold is being paid and received at any given time: so that when the price purports to be a certain quantity of gold, no more and no less should be paid and received. For this purpose, either Governments or individuals of sufficiently respectable character must place a stamp or other mark on the bullion to intimate what it consists of: and this is the prerogative or privilege of coining. It has been ex-

tensively believed that Governments were the only persons who were competent to give a credible assurance that metallic money contained a certain amount of bullion. Nevertheless, at Rome, the patricians had, for a long period, the right of coining money, and it is evidently an infraction of the principles of Free Trade and unlimited competition to vest in Governments the monopoly of stamping metallic money. It is evident that trade would go on if Baron Rothschild's head were on our coin instead of Queen Victoria's; and Mr. S. J. Loyd's assurance that £3 17s. 10½d. of his currency contained an ounce of gold and no more, would be as good as a similar assurance from the Master of the Mint. Such a system might be worked under a severe law against instances of fraud, and under legislative provisions, enumerating what coins should be allowed by law to be a legal tender, and what amount of gold and silver they should respectively contain. These provisions would be necessary in order to free us from the confusion of different systems of coinage, with different names, and with the same names and different weights, whose complexities would rival those of the Swiss *batzen*. So long as the pieces of coin really contained that amount of bullion which they were certified to contain, no effect would be produced except that the expense of coining, now defrayed by the State, would be borne by the public in the shape of a permanent difference of value between the manufactured article —sovereign, and the raw material—bullion, and that the coiners would get the ordinary rate of profit on the capital employed in their business. But if debasement were once introduced, if sovereigns did not contain that amount of bullion which they were certified to contain, but only a less amount, sovereigns would be supplied, by the fraudulent producer, with less cost and in greater quantity than by others, would be issued by him upon loan, and in purchase, resale, or consumption, to an undue extent. New purchasers would be brought into the market, who would not have come there if the currency were undebased. The price of goods would rise; the rise in the price of goods would act as a stimulus to production; the stocks of goods for sale would be largely in-

creased; at last the debasement would be discovered; the debased coin would be at a discount; prices would return to their original metallic standard, and would, in consequence, undergo a considerable nominal fall; and that fall would probably go beyond its true limits, because few like to make purchases in a falling market, and most hang back in expectation of an impending additional fall of prices.

Here there is obviously considerable derangement of industry, and considerable evil arising out of the custom of coinage by individuals. Besides this it must be remarked that the chief utility of unlimited competition is its quality of reducing the cost of production to the minimum which Nature admits of. In all mechanical processes, for example, unlimited competition produces continually new inventions and additional economy in the working of old ones; and in general, this has the advantage of supplying human wants at the least possible sacrifice of labour and capital. But improvements in the process of coining brought about by the competition of individual coiners would have a different and less beneficial effect. What is wanted in money is *fixity*[1] of value.

[1] The phrase "*fixity* of value" has been objected to by some on the ground that when the value of one thing alters, the value of all others is consequently changed; thus it is said, if cotton goods fall in price, the value of gold is affected, because it will exchange for less cotton than before. Mr. Senior has perspicuously expressed what appears to us to be the best definition of the words "fixed" and "steady" in the following extract from the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*: "The fluctuations in value to which a commodity is subject by alterations in what we have called the extrinsic causes of its value, or, in other words, by alterations in the demand or supply of other commodities, have a tendency, like all other extensive combinations of chances, to neutralise one another. While it retains the same utility, and is limited in supply by the same causes, a given quantity of it, though it may exchange for a greater or less quantity of different specific commodities, will in general command the same average quantity as before of the general mass of commodities; what it gains or loses in one direction being made up in another. It may be said without impropriety, therefore, to remain steady in value. But the rise and fall which a commodity experiences in consequence of an alteration in its utility, or in the obstacles to its supply, is, in fact, entirely uncompensated. A commodity therefore which is strikingly subject to such

The discovery of a new mine is a very questionable advantage, if it should throw others out of employment, and reduce the cost of production of bullion, and thereby diminish its exchangeable value. All money prices would rise 10 per cent. in consequence of such an alteration in the cost of money to the extent of 10 per cent.; the cause would not at first be recognised as prices rise: the rate of production will be accelerated and the stock of goods on hand augmented: the course of events in fact would exactly resemble that rise of price and extension of supply which we have shown to be a consequence of a debasement of the coinage by individual competing coiners. It has been contended that this is no evil: that the quantities of all goods in the market are equally augmented: and that therefore, as in a state of barter, each would soon find out what he wanted to exchange his own commodities for, so, in the present more artificial state of things, every one would sell at the reduced rate, and would buy what he wanted and no more. The value of commodities in relation to one another, it is contended, has not been affected, and the rise in their money prices, it is therefore legitimately deduced, would only be nominal and immaterial. This argument is so far correct, that the rise of the prices of all commodities to the extent of 10 per cent. in consequence of a corresponding fall in the value of money, being common to all articles, does not affect their relative value. But the increased rate of production which we have shown to be consequent on that rise has a very different effect: an addition of 10 per cent. to all the commodities in a market very materially alters their relative exchangeability. The effect of a very small supply of some articles is enormously to lower their value, while a much larger supply of others hardly diminishes the value at all. For instance, of those articles of which only a limited amount is wanted, a small increase above that amount will cause a great reduction of price. There is a certain amount of plain food, for example, which will thoroughly feed a population: the demand for it, as

variations is properly said to be unsteady in value." When then the *intrinsic* causes of the value of a commodity have undergone no alteration, we shall hereafter say that its value is "fixed" or steady.

Adam Smith long ago observed, is limited by the narrow capacity of the human stomach. A series of very plentiful harvests which should produce a quantity of corn exceeding, in however small an amount, this fixed maximum of demand, would bring down the price of corn enormously. On the other hand, articles of more luxury are often indefinitely desired. A fall in the price of jewellery of ¼ per cent. might bring it within the reach of a new class, and might be a consequence of an increase of 1 per cent. or more in quantity. Therefore it is plain that an increase in the quantity of all commodities would not equally affect the value of them all, but would change their relations to each other very considerably. We must also bear in mind that all articles are not produced in the same time. A rise in the price of one will insure an immediate change in the quantity of it which is produced and brought to market: but it takes years to affect the quantity of an article which it takes years to manufacture. So that not only would an equal increase in the quantity of produce cause a difference of value, but also an equal increase in the rate of increase of all commodities does not immediately ensure an equal augmentation in their supply: and both these it appears are the consequence of a diminution in the value of the currency. Hence it appears that fixity of value is the only essential in the standard of value: that the improvements which competition would introduce into its manufacture would not compensate for the derangement of industry with which they would be inevitably accompanied: that what is wanted is not the cheapest money, but the money whose value is most stable: that what we wish is not to diminish the cost of production of coin, but to render it a constant quantity. Moreover, by giving Government the monopoly of coining we can not only give coin a fixity of value by the difference between the progressive improvements of individual competitors and the conservative habits of an uninventive monopolist; but we can do away altogether with the whole source of alteration in the value of money arising from its having to go through the mechanical process of being coined. Government coins *gratis*. The nation defrays the expense out of the taxation. Coin is

the only manufactured article of no greater value than the raw material out of which it is made.[1]

Hence beside debasement by individual coiners we find another great source of destruction—derangement in the machinery of industry, which is entirely closed up by giving to Government the monopoly of coining metallic money. On these grounds Governments have deemed it necessary to keep the issue of metallic money in their own hands. To us they appear amply sufficient: but we regard with wonder that no thorough-going disciple of the anti-corn-law league has yet advanced the proposition that there ought to be *Free Trade in Sovereigns*. The derangement which debasement introduces into the pursuits of industry is in our view a sufficient reason for keeping it out of hands in which there is a risk of possible fraud. But there is such capital *ad captandum* case by appealing to what our pound was originally, by pointing out how much our Government has in past times debased it, by insisting on the expense and mismanagement of the national Mint, and the want of new openings for national capital, that we really wonder exceedingly at not hearing any one claim for individual industry the lucrative employment of coining the precious metals. We especially wonder that those who with Mr. Hume are so strenuous for unlimited free trade in *paper* money should not take bolder ground, and assert that Government is overstepping its proper limits in meddling with money at all. We shall proceed now to give reasons for believing that all the grounds for entrusting the Government with a monopoly of coining money hold with increased force for giving them a monopoly of the issue of paper money.

We have seen that the introduction of banks of deposit enables a smaller amount of coin to do the work of a larger.

[1] Out of this arises the incidental advantage that circulation in England passes here at its value and in other countries also. Queen Victoria's stamp is worth nothing in France; and by charging nothing for it here we do away with a permanent difference of value between the value of a sovereign in France and a sovereign in England. It should be remarked, however, that no interest is paid by the Government to those who have deposited bullion at the Mint, and this loss of interest during the time occupied by the process of coining amounts to a *very small* seignorage.

The first effect of this, if the introduction were sudden, would undeniably be to throw coin on the market in increased quantity as compared with the transactions of the country, and therefore to depreciate it. Whatever economises the amount of coin in use must inevitably cause a temporary superabundance of it: on this will come a reduction of value, and on this again, if it goes far enough, a melting of coin: the depreciation of bullion itself, in consequence of the additional supply, and consequently an exportation to foreign countries not affected by this local diminution of exchangeable value. Now exactly this very same course of events appears to take place in consequence of the introduction of paper money, which has also the effect of economising the use of coin. In its origin paper money is a promise to pay specie. It is used by a banker in purchases for consumption, in loans and in discounts. Of course it is his interest to pay in promises when he would otherwise have paid in coin, because he thus obtains the use of the coin where his promises would have been useless. Also there is a likelihood that he will lend it when he would not have lent coin, because he will get interest on a loan without having to find intrinsic value to the amount lent. Now the effect of both these courses of action is to bring new purchasers into the market; and thereby to raise prices. We before explained that a facility of obtaining bullion as the medium of interchange had a tendency to raise the price when measured in that medium. The case is not altered when medi*a* is written for medi*um*.[1] The increased facility of obtaining bargain-making instruments would cause more persons to attempt to make bargains; new buyers would come into the market when they could obtain more easily the means of buying. The coming of new buyers into the market while the quantity of commodities remains the same will raise the price of those commodities. The ensuing effects are exactly those which we have shown to arise from a debasement of species by fraudulent competing coiners: *viz.* a great derangement of industry, an increased rate of production, a rise in the value of articles not quickly supplied in additional quantities

[1] This step in our reasoning is vehemently denied by Mr. Tooke. We shall say presently what seems to us sufficient in reply to him.

as compared with those which are of speedy growth and quickly made; a fall in the value of articles much affected by small increase of supply, as compared with others comparatively insensible to this source of fluctuation. These effects are, we admit, only temporary. The debasement of the coin is found out, and so is the depreciation by means of the issue of paper. The rise in the price of commodities affects the price of bullion as a commodity; the good coin is melted down; bullion itself is depreciated; and if the extent of the depreciation be sufficient to cover the cost of carriage, becomes an article of export to other countries. *One* way of obtaining coin for export or melting is by returning notes on the issuers for coin; and it is evident that the return of one-half the notes issued, and the withdrawal of the coin thus obtained from circulation, would bring the currency back to its former quantity, and prices to their former level. The injurious effects of depreciation by convertible paper and of debasement by individual coiners are exactly the same: both productive of extensive mischief while they last. One great difference is, that debasement is a matter that can be tested by the senses: whereas depreciation by paper may continue for a long period of time, without any sign that will certainly convince all inquirers, and controversies concerning it may be multiplied indefinitely by the confusion of philosophers and the mistake of self-interested traders. Another great difference however is, that when the final result has been the *substitution* of paper for coin, a good effect is produced, which is not produced by the discovery of a debasement: a machine produced with very little labour has been made to do work before only to be accomplished by one of very considerable cost; human exertion is economised, and the empire of man over the powers of external nature is extended and confirmed by an increase in the efficacy of his industry.

The debasement of the coin by a monopolist like Government has a somewhat different effect. It is in general known from the first, though its effects in detail have rarely been correctly interpreted: there is seldom any law compelling a return to the original standard, as we have supposed to be the case with competing coiners: and in the great majority of

cases there is no return to the state of things in existence previous to the depreciation. If issued, as it always is, where good coin was not obtainable by the Government, it gives an extra facility of obtaining the media of interchange to the extent of the difference between the cost of production of the debased and the undebased coin. Its effect on industry is therefore similar to that before explained: prices rise and money is depreciated. There is an exactly similar case with a particular kind of paper money issued by the Government, or a monopolist bank, or set of banks. This kind is generally in form a promissory note, but it is not so in reality: it is not payable in anything: it is in intentional language inconvertible. Of this kind were the French *Assignats*, and such are the notes of the Bank of France at the present moment. As its cost of production is nothing compared with the cost of producing gold, an issue of inconvertible paper may be considered as a debasement without limit. Obviously, therefore, the monopolist *can* issue as much as he pleases: he will find people always to take the money: the only limiting causes to depreciation are the habits of issue to which he conforms voluntarily. If by an infallible instinct he found out what quantity of purely metallic money would have sufficed for the wants of the community, and used only that amount, there would be no depreciation. We know that there is no such instinct, and we do not believe that there is any means of calculating the demand for a purely metallic currency, except by the use of it, or of something not more easily attainable than it. Again, if this inconvertible currency were issued by persons who used to issue a convertible currency, and if, trade *happening* to be pretty steady, they issued only that amount of currency which they had been accustomed to issue when obliged to give gold in exchange for their notes, no effect would be produced by the law empowering them to issue inconvertible paper. But this state is clearly one of unstable equilibrium: if trade altered, this fixed amount of currency would become redundant or insufficient: in no way has it any tendency to right itself after receiving the slightest derangement. There is indeed a certain theory known by the name

of the "Law of Reflux," by which Mr. Wilson contends that the quantity of an inconvertible currency suits itself immediately to that of a convertible currency to the quantity of a purely metallic circulation. In substance it is this: that when issued upon loans, they are returned to the issuer if not wanted for the general transactions of the country: thus Mr. Fullarton says very perspicuously: "Bank notes are never issued but on loans, and an equal amount of notes must be returned to the Bank whenever the loan becomes due. Bank notes, therefore, can never clog the market by their redundance. The Bank has only to take care that they are lent on sufficient security, and the reflux and the issue will in the long run balance each other. Perfect convertibility is no doubt one essential condition of every sound and perfect system of currency. It is the only effectual protection against internal discredit, and the best preventive against any violent aberrations of the exchange with other countries. But it is not so much by convertibility into gold, as by the regularity of the reflux that in the ordinary course of things any redundancy in the bank-note issuer is rendered impossible." And both Mr. Tooke and Mr. Fullarton have elsewhere written copiously to the same effect. But it is hardly true as a fact that all bank notes are issued as *loans*. They are, we believe, not unfrequently issued by country bankers in purchases for consumption. Also on the general question Colonel Torrens well writes: "Mr. Fullarton reiterates this argument through several pages, innocently unconscious of the fact that, in order to give it any weight and validity, it is necessary that the loans should be repaid on the instant they are granted. Allow any interval to elapse between the loan and the repayment, and no regularity of reflux can prevent redundancy from being increased to any conceivable extent." It is certainly very strange to find a distinguished practical man of business like Mr. Wilson, laying down the old doctrine of the Bank directors that inconvertible bank notes could not be depreciated, no matter at how low a rate of interest they are issued. Why those who hold this doctrine do not go further, and maintain that everybody should be allowed to issue debased coin *ad*

libitum, is more than we can understand. Every argument here alleged is at least equally valid for coin of less intrinsic value than it purports to be, as it is for paper which is almost destitute of intrinsic value: and Mr. Hume is ever ready to give ample evidence of the management of the National Mint. Mr. Tooke, who is more moderate though perhaps less strictly logical, contends for the law of reflux only when the notes are lent at the existing rate of interest. But to select one objection out of many, is it to be supposed that the competition of issuers, or the self-interest of the monopolist Bank, will not delay the rise of the rate of interest by continuing to offer loans and discounts at the market rate, and then at least quantities of money, which Mr. Tooke admits to be excessive, will be issued upon the market, and will have the effect so often insisted on in raising prices and depreciating money? Moreover, it is quite unproved that the facility for lending afforded by the privilege of issuing money destitute of intrinsic value will not cause quantities of it to be issued which would not have been issued under less favourable circumstances: the obvious presumption is, that they will be issued. The market rate of interest is affected by very many different circumstances, many of them quite unconnected with money and is therefore an unsatisfactory guide for regulating issue of it—especially since the quantity issued has a reflux effect on the rate of interest. Mr. Wilson, we doubt not, would reply that more money would not be kept out than the transactions of the country require: we venture to oppose to his great authority the still greater authority of Mr. Ricardo: "The plea that no more is issued than the wants of commerce require is of no weight; because the sum required for such a purpose cannot be defined. Commerce is insatiable in its demands, and the same portion of it may employ ten millions or one hundred millions of circulating medium; the quantity wholly depends on its value. If the mines had been ten times more productive, ten times more money would the same commerce employ." "Money," says Mr. Senior, "is abstract wealth:" anyone who wants anything, wants that which will buy everything. Once lessen the difficulty of obtain-

ing money, and there will be no want of claimants for the use of it.

Mr. Tooke has another theory which is, we believe, peculiarly his own, so far as writers of any name and authority are concerned. It is sometimes stated in the form that "changes in the amount of circulation do not affect prices at all". Upon this point we can only refer our readers to what we have said before: we have nothing new to say, and we must not repeat arguments already wearisomely insisted on. Circulation is bartered for commodities, and commodities are bartered for circulation. Mr. Tooke strenuously maintains everywhere in his *History of Prices*, that the quantity of commodities brought to market affects their price as measured in circulation; and why the commodity circulation should not be depreciated by super-abundance and appreciated by scarcity, is to us inscrutable. Another of Mr. Tooke's *dicta* is, that an increase of circulation is a consequence, not a cause, of a rise of prices. We believe that sometimes it is a cause and sometimes an effect. We have pointed out various instances, as the debasement of the coin, in which our increase of circulation is a cause and not a consequence of a rise of prices. But we fully concede to Mr. Tooke, that if money circulates at an unaltered rate,[1] the same amount of commodities might require a greater amount of money to circulate them at some times than at other, because there would be periods of speculation in which there was a great wish to interchange commodities, and times of depression in which the desire to interchange is comparatively weak. There are also, no doubt, cases in which a slight diminution in the supply of articles of primary necessity causes a great increase in their price, not immediately counterbalanced by a corresponding fall in other articles; and this might cause a general rise of prices, and

[1] The rate of circulation at different times deserves, perhaps, a more accurate treatment than it has received. Since in times of speculation men are more eager to purchase, and money will circulate more rapidly, and if an undue issue of notes cause an increase of speculation, it appears that they will not only act on price by increasing the quantity of money, but also by increasing the efficiency of what were originally in circulation.

require more money to circulate them. All this, and several other cases of a similar character, may be admitted by the staunchest advocate for the Bill of 1844; although Mr. Tooke not unfrequently argues that any increase of prices not caused by an increase of circulation is fatal to it. No one denies that if a case can be found of a general rise of prices not originating in such a scarcity as would counterbalance the rise of price by the diminution of quantity, either an increase in the quantity of circulation or an enhancement of its value will necessarily take place. But it is proposed, also, to lay down that a general fall of prices will ensue on an increased difficulty of obtaining money. Few will allege that alterations in the value of money are more than disturbing causes; few will deny that the alterations in the supply and demand of commodities are the main constant causes of their exchangeable values.

Nevertheless, though we cannot concur in the extravagant eulogiums which some writers have recently lavished upon the opinion of Mr. Tooke, we are not disposed with Colonel Torrens to put them aside as worthless, or treat them as a "psychological study". The evidence of a distinguished practical man of business against any law, the working of which he has minutely studied, will rarely be found entirely destitute of instruction. On one point we think he is decidedly victorious over Colonel Torrens. Mr. Tooke contends that though no new purchasers can, under the present law, be brought into the market by an undue issue of bank notes, nevertheless other media of interchange can be found, such as bills of exchange and book credits, that will do the work, if not so conveniently yet not with intolerable inconvenience. Mr. John Mill has well said that "Bank notes are to credit what coin is to bullion": they are, that is, the most convenient and efficacious mode of employing it. But Mr. Mill urges that a banker can find other means of giving his customers credit when he pleases: there are other ways of bringing new purchasers into the market who would not have come there if the banker had been obliged to procure coin to make the necessary advances. On this point Mr. Tooke writes:—

"When the Bank of England or a country banker makes an advance, or discounts a bill, the borrower or discounter is asked how he wishes to have the amount. In the case of the Bank of England the borrower, when the discount or loan is agreed on, has the option of receiving gold or notes or a book credit. In by far the larger proportion of instances I believe the book credit is preferred; a cheque on the Bank is passed, and placed by the borrower to his account with his banker, who as between himself and the Bank of England sets off the amount against acceptances to bills or cheques upon him held by the Bank, or simply places it to the credit of his deposit account with the Bank. In this case not a single note is created or issued, against several millions of securities upon which advances are made either to individuals or to governments."

Evidently so long as transactions take place between customers of the Bank of England the transfer of certain figures from one man's account to another is enough to transfer a very large amount of wealth through any number of consecutive hands. Again, it is a well-known fact that bills of exchange were media of interchange competing against bank notes in Lancashire, and were for a time in great measure successful. Now these substitutes, we admit, take away considerably from the advantage of giving to the Government a monopoly of the issue of bank notes and coin; their existence is a very serious set-off against the utility of Sir R. Peel's measure. But we cannot make, with Mr. Tooke and Mr. Mill, the next step, and deduce that they entirely destroy that utility. Bank notes are by very much the most efficacious and customary substitute for coin; for one transaction performed by means of bills of exchange or book credit, perhaps a large number are performed by means of notes payable on demand.[1]

[1] Mr. Fullarton appears to think bank notes "insignificant" as compared with bills. We are glad to be able to oppose to him the authority of Mr. J. S. Mill, who states that as bills are more powerful forms of credit than book credit, so bank notes are more powerful than bills. This statement is given in his recently published *Principles of Political Economy*, after an elaborate examination of the subject, and is of the

Few facts can show this more clearly than the fact that able men very familiar with the course of events have been accustomed to ignore these substitutes altogether, to treat notes and specie as the only media of interchange requiring the attention of speculators and legislators. Bank notes and coin circulate from hand to hand without endorsement, and therefore finally close transactions at once, while bills of exchange do not close them until finally paid. Coin and notes are capable of being used by those who do not keep their accounts with the same bankers, and in this are far more efficient than book credits. Although therefore we admit that these substitutes for the use of coin and notes exist, and that they must of necessity be left in the hands of individuals; although we also concede that a habit of giving excessive credits of long duration will derange industry in the same manner as a depreciation of paper or a debasement of the coin, we still feel disinclined to give the issue of either coin or bank notes (for the argument tells, it will be observed, equally against both) to the haphazard of unrestricted competition; we must not allow more potent instruments of derangement to work unimpeded, because less potent ones are working side by side with them; it is the duty of a wise State to secure the mass of the nation against evils produced by the selfishness of individuals so far as it is possible: to bring within Government control even the most limited causes of commercial convulsion.

A verbal puzzle also is raised and prolixly argued by Mr. Tooke as to what constitutes *money*: he confines the word to coin and inconvertible paper, and maintains that convertible paper and bills are only forms of circulating credit. The terminology is not, in our view, very interesting; yet we may observe, that in our eyes it is a superfluous subtlety to say that metallic money does not circulate on the credit of the coiners: the Government stamp is an assertion concerning the amount of bullion contained in the coin, and the user of it uses it on the *faith* that this assertion is true, and it is hard to

greater authority from the resemblance between the views of Mr. Mill and Mr. Fullarton on many parts of the subject. We regret that Mr. Mill's book did not reach us before this article was written.

draw the line between this and credit. Again, inconvertible paper for the most part circulates, because it is believed that no issue of it in quantities sufficient to cause depreciation will immediately take place: no trader who could help selling would take *assignats* in exchange for his goods if he knew that the Government were going to issue immediately an enormous amount of them. We think it inexpedient to draw this fine distinction between trust and credit in the definition of a word so often to be used. Colonel Torrens, as we think, says truly, that in ordinary speech a payment in bank notes is a ready-money payment: and that

"The terms money and currency have hitherto been employed to denote those instruments of exchange which possess intrinsic or derivative value, and by which, from law or custom, debts are discharged and transactions finally closed".

We should somewhat differ from Colonel Torrens as to what this definition would include; but as we would not weary our readers with mere questions of nomenclature, we shall only add that, even if Colonel Torrens could make out that bills of exchange and book credits are not currency in the technical sense of the word, this would not justify his inference that their operation upon the transfer of commodities is so different from that of bank notes as not to interfere with the consequences of leaving the issue of the latter in the hands of Government alone.

In answer to Mr. Tooke and Mr. Wilson's objections to Sir R. Peel's measure, we may use an *argumentum ad hominem* of some plausibility. Both these writers admit that the "convertibility" of bank notes into coin is an essential condition of their safest and most beneficial employment. It is also clear that the failure of individual issuing bankers reduces to a nullity the legal obligation to give coin in exchange for notes. While the issue of notes is a matter left to unrestricted competition, and when, as Mr. Wilson's principles of Free Trade in Banking and Currency imperatively demand, no more care is taken to secure the convertibility of notes than to secure the payment of deposits, a very serious fraction of the "circulation credit" of the realm is mischievous credit, founded on no real

basis, but resting on a belief in the riches of insolvent bankers. Even with the restricted number of individual issuers, admitted by the present law, there have been four failures of issuing banks in the counties west of London, and some of these appear in the papers as having "almost no assets". If new banks of issue had been allowed to spring up during the railway mania, who can doubt that a large number of insolvent concerns would have come into existence, and have gone down at the first appearance of depression, leaving the holders of their notes with papers not only inconvertible, but valueless? Even were it admitted that issues of convertible paper can never depreciate coin, we should still contend that there would be a case for the interference of Government to secure the convertibility of the coin; and as an *argumentum ad hominem* against Mr. Wilson, we hold it to be perfect.

These reasons appear to us to answer the objections of Mr. Tooke and Mr. Wilson to the Bill of 1844, which relate to the internal transactions of the country. With respect to our foreign relations we shall speak presently, and also with respect to the interference of Government in October last. But first we shall sum up what we have already advanced in the assertion, that the issue of money is a fit case for a Government monopoly, because the object aimed at is not to reduce the cost-price, but to render it fixed: because fluctuations in value are attended with a great derangement of internal commerce; because the interests of individual coiners and issuers is at variance with the interest of the community, and because as a result of the whole, the principle of individual self-interest cannot here be trusted to as a security for the welfare of the community.

We hope we have made good our assertion, that the arguments which are held to be sufficient in relation to a Government monopoly of coining are equally good for a Government monopoly of paper money. And this is the more worthy of remark, because we have not as yet availed ourselves of one of the most powerful arguments against those who purpose to superadd to our present system of metallic money a "free trade" in paper currency. At present the whole expense of

procuring money from the mine is borne by the community at large, and the expense of coining is defrayed by the State. Surely it appears but fair that those who bear the expense of providing this costly instrument should derive the advantage accruing from the use of an equally efficient but more economical substitute. Nevertheless, under the system of "Free Trade in Banking" the profit derived from the substitution of paper for gold goes to the banker and not to the community: it resembles the profit of debasement by individual coiners of which we have spoken so often: it is as if one partner were to derive the whole advantage from an economy of the paid-up capital belonging to the whole mercantile concern.

The arguments which we have here used are based entirely on the internal circumstances of the country, and we think they afford ground for saying that unless serious dangers arise out of its external relations, the principles we recommend are worthy of adoption. That no such dangers exist is presumable from the fact, that the advocates of the measures of 1844 are prone to select these external relations as the stronghold of their argument. The object of our propositions, our readers will remember, has been to preserve fixity of value in the currency, and it remains to be seen whether the effects upon foreign trade of those depreciations and appreciations of which we have been speaking are injurious or beneficial: if they are injurious, they will be confirmatory of our case; if beneficial, a set-off against it. The state of this part of the case we believe to be as follows: If all the world used the same coins, and regarded the same precious metal as the standard of value, the trade between two nations would not, so far as currency is concerned, differ from that of the same nation; the trade between London and Paris would be like that between London and Glasgow, except that, as in the territories of the German Zollverein, the same coin would in every different place bear the stamp of its own special Government. Nor is the case materially altered when the currencies of two countries are not the same but different, but when the same metal is the standard of both: an equation is then settled by estimating the amount of the standard metal (the Govern-

ment stamp counting of course for nothing beyond its own territories), and this equation is called in mercantile language the *par* of exchange. When two different metals are used as the standard, the *par* consists of the quantities of the two which exchange one for another in the market; and here the *par* is not as in the first case an invariable physical fact ascertainable by the senses, but something which depends on the fluctuations of the market, and can only be known by noting down the results of each day's bargaining. Now it is plain that in either of these cases the depreciation of what in one country is the standard of value will tend to cause its exportation; and similarly its appreciation will act as a premium on its importation. If English bullion goes abroad to a country having no previous debt due from England, something must return in order to pay for it; and in this case depreciation of the currency, by providing a profitable article of export, will act as a premium upon import. If bullion is exported to a country having a credit on England, there is no occasion why any commodity should return in order to pay for the bullion, because the latter is really transmitted to pay off a debt. There is no special inconvenience in these events in themselves; but one particular case exists in which they certainly aggravate very serious evils. If from any cause, as a deficient harvest, bullion and coin are being drained out of this country, there is a certain point at which they would be so elevated in value as to render it no longer profitable to export them. But if by an issue of paper simultaneously with the continuance of the drain we provide an efficient substitute, the supply will seem not to be diminished, the value will not rise, coin will be exported instead of commodities; the drain of bullion will not cease where it would have ceased under a purely metallic circulation; it will be for a longer period the *most* profitable article of export. Such a management of the paper circulation is at variance with the first principle of a metallic currency, which we have shown to be that, *cæteris paribus*, the circulation should increase with the cheapening and diminish with the appreciation of bullion. Also, if the paper circulation were augmented by the increase of the notes of issuing bankers

competing with one another, another serious inconvenience will of necessity arise. It appears to be an attested fact of experience, that the deposit reserve of banks is the first place from which bullion is obtained for exportation: a continuance of a foreign drain is therefore accompanied with a steady drain on the deposits, and this we are now to suppose accompanied by a steady increase of the note circulation. We believe that no one will deny the great danger of such a course to the solvency of the bank. If the circulation were to get out of credit, the danger would be most serious: all the most available resources are expended in meeting the drain on the deposits; all that can be most advantageously, or at least disadvantageously, sold has been sold to meet this drain: and if a new drain were added in the shape of a run caused by discredit of the circulation, the solvency of the banks, and the convertibility of the notes in the hands of the public would be instantly threatened by a danger from which it would be difficult to escape. These two serious difficulties arising out of the foreign relations of the country appear to us to strengthen the argument against the system of competing issuers which was derived from those internal circumstances which are affected by the depreciation of the currency. But because we are prepared to defend the measure of Sir R. Peel on this ground, it is the more incumbent on us to state that we are quite at issue with certain persons who, as Mr. Wilson has concisely stated, loudly proclaim to the world "that the great and leading principle of the Act of 1844 is that, in the event of adverse exchange against their country, our system has a self-acting principle of contraction by which the prices of commodities shall be reduced so that they may be exported in preference to gold".

We believe it to be a demonstrated truth of science, that rises and falls of price caused simply by a contraction and enlargement of the circulation do not of themselves affect foreign trade at all. The depreciation of bullion provides a more profitable article of export; but if it were profitable to export commodities before, we believe it will be profitable still: the appreciation of bullion provides a more profitable

article of comfort, but if before it were profitable to import commodities, no diminution of profit will ensue on the change of price due to a contraction of the currency. A mode of conducting business important to be noticed in this connection is thus described by Mr. Blake: "The merchant is regulated in the conduct of his business by a comparison of the prices which commodities bear in the home and in the foreign market; his attention is directed to the prices current, accounts of which are constantly published, and immediately communicated to his correspondents abroad. If he finds that the price of the same commodity abroad is so much higher than in the home market, that its sale abroad will pay the expense of freight and insurance, and at the same time leave him an adequate profit for his trouble, he will immediately purchase and export the commodity in question. As soon as the bill of lading is received by his correspondent to whom the goods are consigned, he will draw his bill upon him for the amount; and if the exchange be at *par*, will have no difficulty in procuring money equal to the value specified in the bill by negotiating it in the market at home. But if the exchange be not at *par*, it is evident that his calculations upon the profit he is likely to derive from the export must include the premium or discount which he will receive or pay in the disposal of his bill."[1]

Now it appears clear that any cause which raises or lowers the prices of all commodities will also raise or lower the price of bills of which the value is regulated by the same causes as the value of all other kinds of merchandise. For example, an increased facility of obtaining money will bring new purchasers into the bill market just as into all other markets, and the price of bills will rise in consequence. Hence although a merchant wishing to export would receive a discouragement from the rise of prices 10 per cent. in consequence of a depreciated currency, nevertheless by the mode of conducting business above described he would obtain a premium of 10 per cent. on his bill. Similarly an increased difficulty of obtaining money will not only lower the premium on bills, but

[1] *Blake on the Exchange.* The word Real has been omitted before Exchange as foreign to our present purpose.

perhaps change it into discount. So that a depreciation of the currency does not lessen the profit on the exportation of commodities, nor when the merchant looks to deriving a part of his profit from the sale of his bill does the appreciation of the currency increase that profit in the least. Again, in the foreign bill market the depreciation of English currency will lower the price of bills in England. All persons who wish for English coin to purchase goods in England for exportation or immediate consumption will be less willing to bid for the money-order when the purchasing power of that money is diminished. Hence it is clear that the depreciation of English currency reduces the price of bills on England in the foreign market; so that a foreigner might be no less ready to export commodities from England after than before the rise in the price of goods owing to a depreciation of the currency, and obtain by the less price he pays for a bill a profit corresponding to the loss occasioned by the additional price which he has to pay for his commodities. It may therefore be laid down that the price of bills of exchange on foreign countries in the home market rises and falls with the prices of commodities when these are affected by alterations in the value of the currency: that is, the price of such bills varies *directly* with the price of commodities: while the price of bills on England in the foreign markets varies *inversely* with the price of articles, here increasing when they diminish, and diminishing when they increase. Therefore an exporting merchant who sells his bill at home will sell it for more when the price of commodities rises; and if he buys his bill on England in the foreign market he will pay less for it; and an importing merchant who sells his bill abroad will have to pay less for it, and will be able to get less for the bill on foreign countries which he might sell in the English market. Therefore it is evident that when the business is managed by means of bills, alterations in the value of the currency do not of themselves act as premiums on the export or import of commodities: they neither increase nor diminish the profit of the merchant. When therefore the currency cannot be itself exported, its effect on foreign trade is nothing at all. The depreciation of French *assignats* was not of itself

calculated either to increase or to diminish the French imports. When the currency consists of articles of intrinsic value like bullion, which are capable of export, its depreciation of course, as previously stated, will be a bounty on its export, and therefore often on the import of commodities returning to pay for it: and similar propositions *mutatis mutandis* are true of appreciation. Foreign trade then is barter like other trades; and the depreciation of one article has an effect not only on the profitableness of its export, but leaves unaffected the profit on the export of these. Money is but a single commodity, and changes in its local value only cause its export, but have no tendency to diminish the profit or the export of other commodities. Men have not allowed themselves to be mastered by their own instrument; what trade was before money existed, it is still in the main and essentially. One article has attained an additional useful property, and the demand for it is subjected to another cause of fluctuation; but this has not power enough to alter the general course of international commerce.

It is evident that the exportability of coin is oftentimes a source of variations in its value: so much may be exported to pay for a deficient harvest, that what remains may be dearer. It has therefore often enough been proposed to provide a currency independent of the exchange, and not susceptible of this species of appreciation and depreciation. We have never seen any plan which appeared to us successful to meet this object, and we doubt whether there is any one both theoretically unobjectionable and practically feasible. Those plans which propose a currency with intrinsic value have failed, because the material which they have proposed was possessed of other useful properties besides serving as currency, and could therefore be exported like bullion. Those plans which adopt a currency without intrinsic value seem as yet defective in laying down any thoroughly satisfactory rule for regulating its amount. One method of arriving at the end desired is, by finding some commodity which only has utility, in consequence of the convention of a particular state to use it as money, but of which nevertheless the supply is determined

by the cost of production. This could not be exported, because its value would be limited by the frontiers of the country which agreed to use it as currency; and yet its amount would be determinable just as gold and silver now are. No such commodity, however, appears to exist, and the conception of it is only a theoretic dream as to what would constitute the best currency for the internal traffic of a nation.

Mr. Tooke has a violent philippic against Ricardo for having dared to assert that coin was never exported except from a redundancy in the currency; and objects that the facts of 1847 are of themselves enough to prove that coin is exported to pay for a deficient harvest. But we would ask, what is Ricardo's test of a redundant currency? We believe that he would have called any currency redundant when coin became the most profitable article of export: so that this controverted proposition reduces itself to the simple truth, that coin is not as a rule exported when there is any other more profitable article of export. To this we do not think Mr. Tooke has offered any valid objection. It is quite indisputable that the tendency of trade sets most strongly toward those transactions which yield the greatest pecuniary return. The reason is, that there is an immense amount of capital not used by its owners, but lent to those who will bid highest for it;—of course those whose trade yields them the greatest return will bid most for the capital which aids them in carrying it on. We are bound, however, to concede to Mr. Tooke that Ricardo has not expressed with sufficient clearness the proposition that the risk of sudden falls of price is one element in the determination of the profit requisite to ensure the entrance on a mercantile speculation. In the case of a deficient harvest, we are obliged to ransack countries for our subsistence which are unused to employ our manufacturers to any great extent. It is therefore certain that a small increase in their quantity will produce a glut of them and a great fall in their value, and therefore a great loss to the merchant. But bullion, as Mr. Blake has well observed, is the article of the steadiest possible value: a very slight lowering of its price very greatly

increases the quantity of it employed, and therefore the risk of exporting coin is less than the risk of bullion. Hence is it that bullion leaves the country before the price current alone would seem to render it advisable; therefore is it that bullion merchants seem to trade on smaller profits than other mercantile men. As a result, then, of what has been said, it appears that so far from the foreign relations of the State affording any objection to fixity in the standard of value, at least one serious danger arises out of one case of depreciation, *viz.* an undue prolongation of a foreign drain of bullion; an export, that is, of bullion, when commodities would have been otherwise exported: as a consequence of this, an increase in the home stocks of commodities, an alteration of their prices, and, as has been shown, a considerable derangement of domestic industry. Here then we find an additional reason to approve of the Government monopoly of the currency, and of the Act of 1844, as an approximation to that system.

In deference to the censures of Mr. Tooke we pass to a consideration of the interference of Ministers in October last, which he considers a convincing proof of the failure of Sir R. Peel's Act. The measure of Sir C. Wood and Lord J. Russell may be defended on two distinct grounds: one resting on consideration of currency; the other on considerations derived from banking. The currency argument is this—It is a great defect of a purely metallic circulation that the quantity of it cannot be readily suited to any sudden demand; it takes time to get new supplies of gold and silver, and, in the meantime, a temporary rise in the value of bullion takes place. Now as paper money can be supplied in unlimited quantities, however sudden the demand may be, it does not appear to us that there is any objection on principle to sudden issues of paper money to meet sudden and large extensions of demand. It gives to a purely metallic circulation that greater constancy of purchasing power possessed by articles whose quantity can be quickly suited to the demand. It will be evident from what we have said before, that this power of issuing notes is one excessively liable to abuse, because, as before shown, it may depreciate the currency; and on that account such a power ought only to be

lodged in the hands of Government, and not of a body of traders deriving profit from the increase of their note circulation. It should only be used also in rare and exceptional cases. But when the fact of an extensive *sudden* demand is proved, we see no objection, but decided advantage, in introducing this new element into a metallic circulation. We see here only one other case of Government intervention to ensure steadiness in the standard of value. Now something like this happens in periods of extensive discredit, especially under the present system of provincial banks of issue. Every banker is obliged to keep a new reserve to meet the augmented danger of a run for his paper. This requires a large increase of circulation, and it is difficult to obtain gold to satisfy so unexpected a demand. Also no merchant knows whom to trust: he is not disposed to give his banker so much credit as heretofore, but to keep in his till money which he would otherwise have put into the bank, and this materially restricts the economy which banks of deposit introduce into the circulation; and when the currency has suited itself to the business of the country under a system of economy, it becomes difficult to make it do the same work under a system comparatively costly. We here see an additional reason for giving Government the sole issue of paper money, because the discredit of individual bankers so much aggravates other species of discredit as to require the issue of additional Bank of England notes. This principle, we would say in answer to Mr. Tooke, is recognised in the Act of 1844. It provides that Bank of England notes may be issued in a extra amount in the place of country paper, which, from an apprehension of its falling into discredit, its issuers may be desirous to relinquish altogether. The intervention of Ministers, therefore, so far from being a proof of failure in the Act, is but a further extension of a principle which it recognises: an application to one case of apprehended distrust of the very remedy which the Act itself prescribes for another.

A further and still more urgent reason arose from the condition of the Banking Department. "On the 30th of October their reserve was reduced," says Colonel Torrens, "below

£2,000,000 against liabilities amounting to £14,200,000, and it was believed that at a later period the coin and notes in the till of the Banking Department fell short of £1,600,000." Such a state of things was obviously a near approximation to failure. Moreover, the failure of the Bank of England would be equivalent to a temporary stoppage of the mercantile business of the country. Colonel Torrens again writes: "The stoppage of the Bank of England would be tantamount to a general stoppage of the London private banks and discount houses. This great establishment, from the vast amount of capital at its disposal, from its being the depository of the public revenue and of the banking reserve of the subordinate banking establishments of the metropolis, wields a tremendous power, the misdirection of which might lead not only to its own insolvency, but to a general insolvency of all subordinate concerns, and to a national bankruptcy." No Government would be justified in allowing this to come about while there remained a chance of preventing it by the use of any means whatever. That the Bank directors were excessively to blame, we have no doubt at all. They run a risk of failure which might have injured the proprietors of Bank stock, whose agents they are; under similar management, any smaller banking establishment would have been utterly ruined.

No doubt this interference of Government to support the Banking Department is very different from the currency regulations of which we have spoken before. It goes far beyond the intervention of Government to give fixity to the standard of value; it amounts to the admission that Government may settle when money of fixed value shall be lent to one man and borrowed from another. A person well instructed in the principles of free trade will be apt to wonder at this. He will ask, "Why is the whole mechanism of industry liable to be set wrong by the misconduct of one body of men?" In no other trade but banking are we dependent on the conduct of one firm. Either what I have been taught is a mistake, and trade will not manage itself without external superintendence, or there has been some previous derangement by former laws; either the intervention of Government to keep trade in a right

course is always and essentially necessary, or we are now suffering from the evil consequences of former mistaken interventions. History supplies the answer in a sentence. Government for a long period gave the Bank of England almost a monopoly of *Banking* in London. They gave privileges to a single corporation which enabled it to put all competitors at defiance. The experience of Scotland would in itself be a strong argument that this interference was the cause of the excessive preponderance of the Bank of England over the other establishments. In Scotland there has been no monopoly, but all other circumstances are pretty similar, and there we are not dependent on the good management of a single overgrown establishment, but on the prudential skill of a moderate number of tried, trustworthy, and experienced corporations. The deductions of the theory come to confirm the inductions of experience. In the competition of capital against capital, each has, up to a certain point, an advantage proportioned to its comparative magnitude. Thus Mr. Babbage writes, in his *Economy of Manufactures*: "When, from the peculiar nature of the produce of each manufacture, the number of processes into which it is most advantageous to divide it is ascertained, as well as the number of individuals to be employed; then all other manufactories which do not employ a direct multiple of this number will produce the article at a greater cost". The same is true of the extra *risk* which small capitals run in comparison with large ones. When the insurance premium is 10 per cent. a man with twenty ships, of equal value, and running equal distinct risks, can obviously insure himself: it is the same thing to him whether he loses one ship or pays the insurance; and the same with any multiple of twenty. Similarly, if taking the whole of any business its risks are as 10 to 100 on a perpetual average, that is, if ten of its transactions fail in every hundred, a man who, under any run of luck, can always go through one hundred transactions would gain an advantage over those with less; and no one would have an advantage over him. The tendency of things is toward capitals arranged on a certain scale, with a fixed minimum and multiples of it. So that we may lay down that the natural government of all

trades, including banking, is an oligarchy according to the strict Aristotelic conception of it, where a few govern because of their wealth; but the Bank of England is obviously a τύραννος, who has obtained aid from without to overthrow the constitution and establish his own rule.

These considerations weigh strongly with us against the system of Mr. Tooke. He wishes it to be a law, or almost a law, that there should always be a reserve of £10,000,000 in both departments. This, it seems to us, is perpetuating that system of Government interference with banking from which so many evils have arisen. We quite admit that it may be necessary to interfere again because we have interfered before; but a permanent system should, in our judgment, be founded on permanently right principles: the effects of past misconduct will wear out in the course of time; but Mr. Tooke proposes to found a lasting system on the rotten basis of antiquated errors, to transmit unimpared to posterity the evils which we have, to our misfortune, inherited from our fathers.

In conclusion we cannot refrain from remarking that the adoption of the measure of 1844 so nearly contemporaneously with the commencement of the Free Trade Legislation in this country, is another very remarkable instance of the practical sagacity of the English people, and of that soundness of understanding which comprehends the widest principles and yet discerns their true limits, which is able to stand the most searching test of the thorough comprehension of a principle, *viz.* the knowing what are its exceptions and what are not. The English are far excelled by the French in logical accuracy and in the taste for symmetry of construction. But we never heard a Frenchman's jokes against the *bizarreries* of the English constitution without bearing in mind that the distaste for sweeping generalisation and the habit of deciding on each case in and for itself, which have produced such a mass of unsystematised legislation, are nearly allied to a deep conviction of the necessary incompleteness of all system, and of the necessity for constant watchfulness to avoid the application of a formula to cases not comprehended in its proof.

P.S.—Since this essay left the hands of the writer, the first report of the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to investigate the causes of the last crisis has been laid on the table of the House. It states that, after a careful review of the evidence, the committee are of opinion "that it is not expedient to make any alteration in the Bank Act of 1844. They approve, however, of a recent change in the constitution of the Bank of England, by which a permanent governor is appointed in place of the old system of annual election. The committee decidedly approve of the intervention of Government in October last; and decline to suggest any machinery which might obviate for the future the necessity of a recourse to the *Deus ex machinâ*." This is disappointing to us, as we had hoped that some unexceptionable "expansive clause" might have been framed to save future Chancellors of the Exchequer from the anxiety which Sir Charles Wood has so feelingly described. This problem, it appears, is considered beyond our present means of solution, and must be left to future times.

We also desire to say, that when insisting so strongly on the necessity of fixity of value in the circulating medium, we have omitted to make use of the most obvious argument in favour of it, *viz.* that changes in the standard of value introduce frauds into all fixed contracts. Thus the depreciation of coin is an advantage to debtors who have to pay fixed sums, and a disadvantage to creditors who have to receive them. This is too obvious to need statement in detail, but its practical importance requires at least that it should be mentioned.

ARTICLE II.—PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY.

(*From "The Prospective Review," 1848. The second article published by Walter Bagehot.*)

Principles of Political Economy, with some of their Applications to Social Philosophy. By J. S. Mill.

THE work on which we are about to comment, seems to us unavoidably to present great difficulties to a reviewer. The admirable qualities of mind displayed in it, and the extensive research out of which it has sprung, make it necessary for the critic to practise a humility to which he is perchance but little accustomed. Moreover, the great size of the work, the number of valuable discussions which it contains, and, more than all, the great importance of almost the whole of its subject-matter, exact from us a difficult selection of topics, in order that our article may not be unpleasing to our readers or altogether unworthy of the work under review.

The course which we shall take will be first to mark Mr. Mill's position among economical and, so far as a few words will go, among general thinkers: and after this introduction to select a single large class of considerations, *viz.* those bearing on the condition of the labouring classes, and to devote our attention to these exclusively. We choose this branch of the subject, not only because of its own intrinsic interest, but also because it contains a large proportion of Mr. Mill's peculiar and characteristic ideas. He is the first among great English Economists who has ventured to maintain that the present division of the industrial community into labourers and capitalists is neither destined nor adapted for a long-continued existence: that a large production of wealth is much

less important than a good distribution of it: that a state of industry in which both capital and population are stationary is as favourable to national well-being as one in which they are advancing: that fixed customs are perpetually modifying the effects which unrestrained competition would of itself inevitably produce: that a large body of peasant proprietors is usually a source of great national advantage: and that a system of emigration on a great scale would be productive of much benefit to the English peasantry by raising their habitual standard of comfort, and therefore putting a check on the reckless increase of a miserable population. These propositions (which are not all that might be set down) will be enough to prove that the subject we have selected for discussion with Mr. Mill contains a sufficient number of his peculiar opinions, and therefore asking our readers to acquiesce in our selection of a special topic, we shall pass on to the general and introductory portion of our article.

In the preface to his work Mr. Mill states that he wishes his work to comprise both the theoretic exposition of purely economical doctrine, and also the extraneous considerations most necessary for its correct application to the real world in which we have to live and act. This he says, because he habitually bears in mind that Political Economy is founded on certain assumptions of which it is very convenient to trace out the consequences separately, but which being seldom accurately true, and being often very wide of the mark, will lead logically to consequences that it may be hazardous to apply without correction to the actual condition of mankind. Thus it is perpetually assumed that men will always buy what they want as cheaply as they can; whereas in matter of fact, vanity, liberality, and indolence are perpetually preventing purchasers from beating down prices to the full extent of their ability.

The existence of such exceptional considerations distributes economists into two classes. What we may call common-sense thinkers have always seen that these extraneous influences were very important matters for their attention wherever actual practice was at all concerned. Adam Smith, for example, is

the most striking specimen of this class of thinkers. He is very eminent in making short inductions from admitted facts, and in applying them with consistency and skill. He is not eminent for precision of statement or for microscopic accuracy of thought; but he is in general very successful in rather vague descriptions of conspicuous phenomena, and in tracing them back to the most influential of their proximate causes. It is evident that a mind so habitually starting with observed facts would be unlikely to neglect important agencies or to bind itself by purely hypothetical assumptions. Ricardo on the other hand is the most important of what may be called the abstract thinkers on the philosophy of wealth. He sets out from certain primitive assumptions, and from these he proceeds to evolve all his results by mere deduction. He but rarely comes into contact with the actual world at all: but frames a hypothetical one which exists nowhere out of his own imagination. Accordingly his views of his subject must be called deep rather than wide: explaining a little very well, but leaving much without remark: giving a little truth which it was difficult to arrive at, rather than a comprehensive summary of all the principles that modify the phenomena which he is considering. In reference to these peculiarities of their minds, it is certainly very remarkable that Adam Smith should have been a recluse student, during his whole life almost exclusively with abstractions, and that Ricardo, who is so eminently an abstract thinker, should have been bred up in actual business, and should have attained his powers of deductive reasoning without any early philosophical discipline. It would certainly have been expected, if we had not known how little outward circumstances avail against the intrinsic aptitudes of a strong mind, that Adam Smith would have looked on nature principally "through the spectacles of books," and that Ricardo would have taken that general, vague, but in the main sufficient judgment upon matters of fact which is generally called "common sense," and which alone among the higher intellectual gifts is habitually exercised in everyday practical life.

In that part of his preface to which we just now alluded, Mr. Mill has substantially expressed his intention of conciliat-

ing the two modes of dealing with his subject; that is, of combining the abstract deduction and logical accuracy which are exemplified in Ricardo with that largeness of view and thorough acquaintance with diversified matters of fact for which the *Wealth of Nations* is so eminently remarkable.

And this great undertaking he has, so far as we can judge, admirably accomplished. The principal applications of abstract science are here treated of with a fulness of information, an impartiality of judgment, and a command over general principles, any one of which would have by itself been enough to make the work take rank as one of eminent merit, and to the union of which we have never seen anything in an economical writer, even approximating equal. No great subject within the range of Political Economy appears to us to have been wholly omitted, and if we acknowledge that all the larger considerations which we could wish for, are not on all occasions introduced, we also admit that minds trained in different schools of thought, and seeing life generally under a somewhat different aspect, must inevitably form conflicting judgments as to what was, and what was not, relevant to particular social problems. We are bound to add, that in almost all cases there is evidence that Mr. Mill has given much and earnest attention to all kinds of argument which seemed to him capable of being opposed to his opinions. Nor with the exception of the *System of Logic* have we read any contemporary publication in which the desire for the mere discovery of truth was either so strong in itself or so immensely preponderant over every other consideration. The false colours of prejudice and passion have no place in an intellect so thoroughly achromatic.

We feel it, therefore, to be almost presumption in us to attempt, as we promised, a description, even in the most general way, of Mr. Mill's position in the list of general thinkers. Yet it seems to us incumbent on the critic of such a man to try his hand at some such task. Mr. Mill has treated with first-rate ability of subjects which involve a discussion of many problems which concern most intimately the highest interests of man; and if we give a notion of the place he

appears to us to occupy among important thinkers, it will be seen why, in some instances, we differ from him, and agree with those whom we should place higher on the scale of worth. Mr. Mill then belongs, we think, to the Aristotelic or unspiritual order of great thinkers. A philosopher of this sort starts always from considerations of pure intellect. He never assumes the teachings of conscience: he never, that is, treats as primordial facts either the existence of a law of duty independent of consequences, nor a moral government of the world, nor a connection either between virtue and a reward, or between sin and retribution. He may have a great mastery over trains of reasoning, a great skill in applying comprehensive principles to complicated phenomena; he may have robust sense like Locke or Adam Smith, a power of exhausting a subject like Aristotle or Bentham, or subtlety like the former, or definiteness in scheming like the latter: but whatever be his merits or deficiencies, this remains as his great characteristic, that the light of his intellect is exactly what Bacon calls "dry light"; it is "unsteeped in the humours of the affections": it rests on what is observed to be: it never grounds itself on any inward assurance of what ought to be: it disregards what Butler calls the "presages of conscience," and attends only to the senses and the inductive intellect. In Physical Science and in Metaphysics, the views of such men may be extensive, subtle or profound: in Politics also they may and often will excel in tracing the different kinds of administrative machinery: they will in general be excellent judges of means, though not well fitted to appreciate what a thinker of a different order would be apt to consider, the highest ends of Government: in morals their views will in general be vague and not seldom erroneous, for their conscience is not luminous enough to give them vivid or well-defined convictions on the subject of duty; and on religion it is well if their tone be not that of Protagoras: *Ὦ γενναῖοι παῖδές τε καὶ γέροντες, δημηγορεῖτε συγκαθεζόμενοι, θεούς τε εἰς τὸ μέσον ἄγοντες, οὓς ἐγὼ ἔκ τε τοῦ λέγειν καὶ τοῦ γράφειν περὶ αὐτῶν, ὡς εἰσὶν ἢ ὡς οὐκ εἰσίν, ἐξαιρῶ.*

Such are the leading characteristics attaching to the school of thinkers, of whom Locke and Aristotle are perhaps the most

attractive representatives, and among whom Auguste Comte is assuredly the least valuable specimen compatible with any remarkable ability. It would lead us too far from our subject to explain at length, that the extreme opposite of that school of thinkers is to be found in the school of Plato, and Butler, and Kant, who practically make the conscience the ultimate basis of all certainty; who infer from its inward suggestion the moral government of the world; the connection between shame and fear, and between sin and retribution: from whose principles it may perhaps be deduced, that the ground for trusting our other faculties is the duty revealed by conscience, of trusting those of them essential to the performance of the task assigned by God to man: thinkers, in short, whose peculiar function it is to establish in the minds of thoughtful persons that primitive Theology which is the necessary basis of all positive Revelation.

To what may be called the *moral genius* of these writers the author before us makes no pretension; he would, we apprehend, indeed, deny that it was possible for any man to possess what we reckon as their characteristic merits. On the other hand, in all the merits of the purely intellectual class of thinkers, we must travel far back into the past before we can find anyone whom we know to be possessed of them in an equal measure. Our author is not indeed in our judgment eminently qualified either to perceive or to appreciate nice and exquisite distinctions; he does not therefore at all make pretension to that combination of metaphysical subtlety and practical shrewdness which so many ages have agreed to wonder at in Aristotle; but nevertheless we hardly know of anyone who has so much of that union of sense and science so remarkable in the Aristotelic treatises on the business of mankind. And in the firmness of grasp with which his understanding retains whatever has once come within its range, and in the undeviating consistency with which he applies every principle that he esteems ascertained, to every case that fairly comes within its scope, we know not where to find his equal.

From the shortcomings habitual to the school to which he belongs, we cannot hold him altogether exempt; but we are

bound to add that these blemishes have rarely been presented in a form so little calculated to offend those whose conception of life may be cast into a somewhat different form. It is, as we have hinted, always evident that Mr. Mill has studiously endeavoured to master the opinions of those from whom he differs: to master them we mean not in order to collect all arguments that may possibly be made available in their confutation, but what is much rarer, with a view of eliciting from them, if possible, the latent truth which all large masses of human belief may be charitably supposed to contain. With these few words we must abruptly conclude a train of thought which would not stop of itself until our limits were exhausted. It is seldom indeed that in this age of books we come into contact with a mind worthy to be compared with the few great authors of the past; and it is seldom, therefore, that we are called to begin a discussion such as the brief one which we are in the act of ending.

We shall now go on to the more special purpose of our Article, namely, of describing and, so far as we can, discussing those of Mr. Mill's speculations which most intimately concern the condition of the labouring classes. We shall first discuss the question on the supposition that the population which we are considering is like that of England divided into the three classes of rent-owners, capitalists, and labourers: each with separate interests, and each capable of separate and, with respect to the others, antagonistic action. And this discussion will naturally subdivide itself into two parts: first, what settles the rates of wages in a country with any given amount of capital and any given number of labourers; secondly, what is the law of the growth of capital, and what the law according to which population is augmented. We shall afterwards make some remarks on the changes which Mr. Mill would introduce into the social framework of Great Britain and Ireland: inasmuch as he has two plans for altering the present threefold division of the productive classes, and one plan for raising the wages paid to the hired labourer under the present system or under any other at all similar to it.

The first question then before us is, What in such a com-

munity as England settles the rate of wages when the number of labourers and the amount of capital are both given? On this point we think Mr. Mill's exposition much less complete than in any other equally important portion of his work; and it will therefore be most convenient to us to state shortly our own view, and then to show what portions of the truth seem to us to be omitted in Mr. Mill's solution of the problem.

Among the circumstances which would first strike a philosophical observer of a country possessing much accumulated wealth, one we think is that the portion of the existing accumulation which is employed in obtaining new additional wealth naturally divides itself into two classes: one which may be called the Co-operative, and which assists and economises the productive agency of man; and another which may be fairly called the Remunerative, the characteristic function of which is to reward the exertion of human labour, by subsisting, for example, the labourer and his family, or by conferring on them any enjoyments in which their habitual circumstances enable them to find a pleasure. The most obvious instance of co-operative capital are steam-engines, power-looms, and machinery in general. Remunerative capital (or what is sometimes called the wages-fund of a nation) consists of corn and clothing, tea and sugar, and other similar commodities which the labourer consents, for the sake of their intrinsic qualities, to receive as a compensation for his mental or muscular exertion. It is obvious that in considering the rate of wages the latter kind of capital is the one more certainly to our purpose. These two commodities, Labour and Remunerative Capital, come into the market and exchange one against the other, and their relative value seems to be settled exactly, as in other cases, by the supply of each and also the demand for it: if there be an additional supply of corn or coarse clothing, and the demand for labour be unaltered, the working classes will be able to command more of these articles; if their supply be less, the same classes will certainly, more or less, be straitened. The intervention of money makes no difference here: it is the same thing, except for convenience sake, whether the capitalist purchase the commodities desired

by the labourer and barter them directly for their labour, or whether he gives the labourers money-tickets, by presenting which they will obtain from certain sellers those identical commodities.

Also it is to be borne in mind that the quantity of such commodities and of labour is not the only point which it is necessary to consider: the demand for these commodities also deserves much careful attention. If an additional number of unproductive consumers were to come into a nation and were not to employ any of its labourers, it is apparent that their consumption entrenches on the fund set apart for the maintenance of the industrial classes, unless the evil be corrected by the importation of corn from abroad, or by increased economy in the unproductive classes previously forming part of the nation. On the other hand, if those unproductive consumers were to bring with them a stock of necessaries adequate to their own consumption, and if they were to employ labourers on a large scale, and to pay them either in money or in commodities, it is evident that the command of labourers over wages-paying commodities would be increased, and that the unproductive classes must expend a larger sum in order to obtain the same quantities of the necessaries of life. Undoubtedly if in this instance there was no importation from abroad and no decrease in the consumption of the more opulent classes, the labouring classes would derive no benefit from the increase in the demand for labour: the demand for wages-paying commodities would have been also increased and their price would have risen; but as a rule that higher price would enforce a stricter economy in the more opulent classes, and thus the labourers would be benefited though not to the full extent of the increased demand for the article in which they deal. In the first case which we noticed, the remuneration for labour was attended by an increased demand in other quarters for wages-paying commodities; and in the second by an increased demand for labour itself at a time when the supply and demand for remunerative capital received—from other causes—neither increase nor diminution. The relative value of labour and wages-paying commodities is settled exactly

as the relative value of Cloth and Hats is ascertained. The intervention of money complicates the phenomena in either case, but, as every one acquainted with the elements of the subject will admit, without introducing any new matter of fundamental principle.

Before proceeding further we shall quote Mr. Mill's observations on this portion of the subject. The following passage does not strike us as a complete rationale of the entire topic: but it contains a valuable summary of our author's opinion:—

"Wages like all other things may be regulated either by competition or by custom; but the last is not a common case. A custom on this subject could not easily maintain itself in any other than a stationary state of Society. An increase or a falling off in the demand for labour, an increase or diminution of the labouring population, could hardly fail to engender a competition which would break down any custom respecting wages by giving either to one side or the other a strong direct interest in infringing it. We may at all events speak of the wages of labour as determined in ordinary circumstances by competition.

"Wages then depend upon the demand and supply of labour, or, as it is often expressed, on the proportion between Population and Capital. By Population is here meant the number only of the working class, or rather of those who work for hire, and by Capital only circulating capital, and not the whole of that, but the part which is expended in the direct purchase of labour—to this, however, must be added all the funds which without forming a part of Capital are paid in exchange for labour, such as the wages of soldiers, domestic servants, and other unproductive labourers. There is unfortunately no mode of expressing by one familiar term the aggregate of what may be called the wages-fund of a country, and as the wages of productive labour form nearly the whole of that fund, it is usual to overlook the smaller and less important part, and to say that wages depend on population and capital. It will be convenient to employ this expression, remembering, however, to consider it as elliptical and not as a literal statement of the entire truth.

"With these limitations of the terms, wages not only depend upon the relative amount of capital and population, but cannot be affected by anything else. Wages (meaning thereby, of course, the general rate) cannot rise except by an increase in the aggregate funds employed in hiring labourers, or a diminution in the number of competitors for rise; nor fall, except either by a diminution of the funds devolvable on paying labour, or by an increase in the number of labourers to be paid."

We think the simpler formula which we have ventured to lay down will obviate the necessity of a recourse to an expression which is not correct, and which is calculated to throw a mist over the real relations between machinery and manual labour. Mr. Mill is also inconsistent with himself in speaking of the wages-fund as a part of "circulating capital," for he has defined the latter to be "the portion of capital which is only capable of being used once": now food is the only wages-paying commodity of importance that is only capable of a single use; in every sense in which machinery is capable of being used, often clothing and cottages are so too. Ricardo, it is true, uses habitually language of this sort, but then he defines circulating capital to be all capital rapidly perishable, and the error is therefore in him much less considerable, but nevertheless it is on every account undesirable to pay such special attention to that shortness of duration which is at best but an accidental quality of remunerative capital.

From this passage, in spite of the ambiguity in its concluding formula, it is evident that Mr. Mill must in consistency hold that an increase of machinery *may* be injurious to the lower classes. In other parts of his work he fully explains that such is his opinion, and in this we entirely agree with him. If, for example, a shifting of industrial relations should ever diminish the remunerative kind of capital, and at the same time increase the co-operative, the proportion, as it is phrased, of labour and capital has indeed remained unaltered; but the amount of that portion of capital which is set apart for the compensation of human industry has undergone a diminution which may be very serious. Again, if capital

has been transferred from Agriculture to the production of Railroads, or Steam Engines, there is no question but that *cæteris paribus* the working classes will be straitened by the change: their labour was before devoted to increasing the fund out of which labour would be remunerated; after the alteration it is devoted to manufacturing articles which, though perpetually productive of new wealth, do not in the same degree contribute to the maintenance of a labouring population.

In this case machinery has been shown to be hurtful to the lower classes, because its creation has diverted resources which would otherwise have been employed in remunerating labour to the essentially different function of aiding the production of commodities which the labourers do not consume. It is also quite possible that the introduction of machinery may be injurious to the lower classes by diminishing the demand for their labour. If machinery be substituted for manual labour in any manufacturing employment, common sense, as Mr. Mill observes, sees that the labourers are worse off in that particular employment, and the *onus probandi* clearly lies upon those who assert that the labouring classes are not worse off generally for the change. What is usually said is, that the wages-fund or remunerative capital of the country remains the same: the use of a certain portion of it is rendered unnecessary in a particular department of industry; but the same aggregate amount exists: it *can* (it is said) only be shifted from one employment to another, and it is believed that the depression of a sort of labourers will infallibly be compensated by the extra remuneration of another. But it is in our judgment an entire mistake to contend that remunerative capital if released from one employment is necessarily employed in a similar capacity in some other. It is one of the points in which this description of capital differs from the co-operative sort, that the latter, if not used for its own characteristic function of aiding human labour, cannot be put to any other use. Machinery if not worked as such in producing wealth, can never be made to produce pleasure to any one; but remunerative capital, which consists of food, clothing, and other commodities adapted to satisfy

certain primitive wants of man, can at once be turned in part at least to the production of transitory enjoyment. This sort of capital, when released from one manufacturing employment, is evidently capable of being used in satisfying the wants of unproductive consumers. The process would be, that less money-wages would be paid in consequence of the substitution of machinery for manual labour; that the working classes would have less to spend on such articles as food and clothing: that these commodities would therefore fall in price: that the fall in price would cause an increased consumption by the unproductive classes, and that their extra consumption would entrench on the fund that previous to the introduction of machinery was set apart as a compensation for industrial exertion. On this point we have some reason to think that Mr. Mill would agree with us; though this is inconsistent with his general principle which we have quoted, and with many arguments which assume that the demand for labour is not an effective force operating on the rate of wages. But our author is continually right in detail where his formulæ would lead him wrong; and we know of no intellectual quality more thoroughly characteristic of a first-rate thinker.

There is, we believe, also another case in which the introduction of machinery is detrimental to the labouring classes. It was pointed out by Mr. Senior several years ago. Mr. Mill has omitted all consideration of it, probably because its practical importance is exceedingly slight. This case is, where the machinery consumed more wages-paying commodities than the labourers whose exertions it has superseded. Of this kind it is supposed that certain employments of the lower animals may be reckoned; these creatures being for our present purpose simply animated machines, and it being perfectly possible that they might consume more food than the labourers whose work they were employed to perform. The peculiarity of this case is an additional demand for remunerative capital consequent on the increased use of machinery. The price of the former would consequently rise, and a certain portion of it be put beyond the reach of those labourers who would otherwise have consumed it.

Another mode exists besides that just now mentioned in which the substitution of co-operative for remunerative capital may be effected, and in which that substitution might be detrimental to the interests of the labouring classes. Ricardo was, it is believed, the first who worked out this view of the subject, which is somewhat more recondite than any consideration with which we have yet had to deal. His instance is in principle as follows: Suppose that a manufacturer of remunerative commodities should be in the habit of employing £1,000 per annum in paying labourers; then if profits were 10 per cent. it is clear that he would have a revenue of £1,100 annually; but if instead of so doing, he chose to expend the same sum in the purchase of a machine, which will last ten years, it is apparent that his thousand pounds will be returned to him together with the ordinary profit by a revenue of £110 per annum, and it is clearly immaterial to him as a capitalist which course he decide to pursue. But if the commodities represented by the £110 be not so numerous as those represented by the £1,100, the consumer of those commodities will obviously be worse off than before. In the case we are supposing the subjects of manufacture are wages-paying commodities, and the consumers we are speaking of are the labouring classes. It is clear, therefore, that they are straitened by whatever diminishes the aggregate annual proceeds of agriculture and of what may be called for shortness wages-making manufactures; but that the capitalist is benefited only by the profit which is left after deducting the expense. In mercantile language this is expressed by saying that the consumer is dependent on the *gross* and the capitalist on the *net* return; in more popular phraseology it may be said that the consumer has only to heed the amount of commodities produced, whereas the capitalist is exclusively concerned with the pecuniary excess of income over outlay. It is evident that the operating cause is, as we said, the substitution of co-operative for remunerative capital; there *was* a certain amount produced to support the labourers during the ensuing year; there *is* in lieu of them a machine of equal pecuniary value: the national capital is the same in amount and the capitalist

obtains as before his accustomed profit; but nevertheless the condition of the labourer and the consumer is deteriorated because they have a diminished supply of articles adapted to satisfy their wants.

To sum up, then, the three cases in which the increase of machinery is detrimental to the labouring population are, first, when its introduction diminishes the supply of remunerative capital; secondly, when the introduction increases the demand for such capital; thirdly, when the demand for labour is diminished by the change. We are very far from thinking that any one of these cases is of frequent occurrence, or that any part of the present depressed state of the lower orders is in any considerable degree owing to an extension of machinery. In our judgment Mr. Mill has ample grounds for contending that by far the greater part of new machinery is merely an investment for the annual *savings* of the country; and being on that account a new creation of wealth does not diminish the existing amount of remunerative capital: nor do wages-paying commodities, except in the not very important instance of coal, appear to be consumed to any considerable extent by existing machinery. We should also hold, contrary to the opinion of Mr. Mill, that the increased demand for labour sometimes eventually caused by the introduction of machinery is decidedly beneficial to the lower orders. The cotton trade is an obvious instance of this; there is no reason, however, for wearying our readers with an examination of our differences on this point from Mr. Mill, because our reasons are only the reverse side of those which we have already exhibited in behalf of our opinion that any decrease in the demand for labour from a similar cause is detrimental to the real interests of the labouring classes.

We have now examined the whole of what Mr. Mill calls the statics of the subject; that is, we have inquired what in any given state of capital and population adjusts the remuneration of labour; and we have found that the two efficient causes were the supply and demand for labour and the supply and demand for a particular species of capital. We have now to treat of what in the continuation of the new scientific metaphor

is called the Dynamics of Political Economy; in other words, we must consider the Laws according to which Capital is augmented and Population increases. We shall incidentally treat of a problem which Mr. Mill has omitted formally to consider; *viz.* what in a progressive state of capital apportions how much of it shall be of the remunerative and how much of the co-operative sort. It is obvious that in our view this question is of great importance in reference to the interests of the labouring classes; we believe also that we shall show strong reasons for thinking that Mr. Mill's omission to consider it has led him into somewhat serious error.

The growth of capital, which we select for first consideration, varies, it is clear, directly with the productiveness of industry and the disposition to save. The productiveness or efficiency depends on a variety of causes, of which only the principle can here be specified, and of which Mr. Mill has nowhere attempted a complete enumeration. However, it may be stated with sufficient truth for all really important purposes, that the efficiency of industry increases with the knowledge of the productive arts, the general intelligence of the people, and in agricultural communities with the natural fertility and favourable situation of cultivable land. Fifty years ago it might have been not unimportant to dwell on the importance of the cultivation of the productive sciences and their corresponding arts, but the prodigious and evident strides which the scientific arts have recently made and the existence of such conspicuous results as railroads and steam engines, and electric telegraphs, make it no longer necessary to dilate on what has become a matter of familiar and popular knowledge. It will now also be generally admitted that the intelligence of the workmen employed both in agriculture and still more in manufactures is an important element in the efficiency of industry. It is incumbent on us to remark that Mr. Mill has collected considerable evidence to prove that of all workmen the English stand particularly in need of some general education; other nations, the Italian it is said especially, seem to possess a natural quickness of perception, by which they are able readily to master, at any time of their lives, new

single processes of manufacture. English labourers, on the other hand, have no such natural powers, but are, as a rule, indebted to a general education for whatever power they possess of working at any branch of industry save the particular one in which they have been brought up. The great authority for this observation is the evidence taken before the Poor Law Commission on the subject of the training of Pauper Children. There was, if we remember right, in the same evidence, and we are a little surprised that Mr. Mill omits to refer to it, a rather remarkable body of testimony to the effect, that though special branches and single processes of manufacture might be learnt by persons almost entirely uneducated, yet that the power of making general arrangements or superintending efficiently the work of others was almost always dependent on school teaching or on an equivalent self-education. These two elements in the productiveness of industry are in an advancing state of society almost always on the increase. It is very different with the third element, the intrinsic fertility of the soil. It is obvious that, as a rule, the most productive land will be the first taken into cultivation, those who have the first choice will in a general way choose the best. Moreover, the situation of land has an exactly similar effect, the lands from which the greatest produce can be most easily obtained are those nearest to the consumer; and these will in general be the first selected for cultivation. We may add, though it is a matter more of curiosity than of importance, that there is a case in which this last cause will counteract the effect of the first, *viz.* where the lands least favourably situated have the greatest natural fertility. Here it might happen that the additional labour required to bring food from a greater distance was exactly counterbalanced by the additional fertility possessed by the more distant soils, and therefore that their cultivation would not increase the cost price of food. But this case of exception is too improbable to need any particular attention, and in general it may be laid down that the first soils taken into cultivation will yield a greater return to the same labour than those that are left without tillage until a later period. It is also a fact of experience, and is deducible

from similar considerations, that doubling the capital and labour on the same land will not double the produce in an unaltered state of agricultural knowledge. It is obvious that men will choose to use first the best means of cultivation which they know of. Hence it appears that in the progress of civilisation the productive art and the general intelligence of the country are in constant increase, but that this increase is ever in part counteracted and sometimes more than overbalanced by the constant necessity of resorting to the cultivation of poorer soils.

So much for the productiveness of industry, which is one cause of the increase of capital. The propensity to save, which is the other cause, means, in more distinct words, the disposition of the people to postpone a present enjoyment for the future advantage of themselves and others. This will obviously vary with the estimate which the people in question are able to form of what is distantly future—a kind of intelligence in which children, savages, and all uninstructed persons, are peculiarly deficient, and on the effects of which Mr. Mill has accumulated various interesting testimonies. The saving habit will also be fostered by a general security, that those who save to-day will be able to enjoy to-morrow, or at least be able to make over their enjoyment to whom they please; by a boldness to meet whatever risk there is that this event will not take place; and by the comparative desirableness of the station which is conferred by accumulated wealth. The two first seem as a rule to augment in strength during an advance of civilisation; the third is perhaps at its maximum in a rather rude and boisterous condition of society; the fourth attains its greatest efficiency in that state of purely commercial industry through which the mercantile and manufacturing classes of England, as well as the Northern States of the American Union, appear at present to be passing. To these four causes must be added the rate of profit which can be derived from the employment of capital. It is evident that men will be more likely to save, *cæteris paribus*, when they get 20 per cent. on their capital than when they get 2 per cent.: but the efficiency of this cause at different times and

circumstances it will be better to consider after examining the subject of population. Then also we shall be better able to estimate the causes which apportion capital into the two divisions that have been before mentioned.

We have now then examined the disposition to save and the productiveness of industry. We have found that the great causes accelerating the growth of capital are the increase of foresight and productive power consequent on the advance of civilisation: the great retarding cause is the diminishing proportion of return with which the soil of the earth rewards the increasing industry of the cultivator. And this is all which can at present be said with advantage with reference to the growth of capital.

We now go to the subject of Population—a topic which is of obvious importance in reference to our peculiar subject, and about which there has been, and still is, a considerable amount of controversy. We are not, however, able to afford to it a portion of our space proportionable either to its interest or its difficulty. It may be broadly stated at the outset that Mr. Mill does not believe the doctrine of Malthus and Ricardo that an increase of the comforts or a decrease in the misery of the labouring classes is invariably followed by an accelerated increase of population; or, on the other hand, that a diminution of their comforts or an increase in their misery will invariably retard the increase of their number.[1] Our author is habitually aware that extreme misery is a great stimulant to population, by begetting recklessness and improvidence: since it may be safely affirmed that an Irishman who is as badly off as he can be, and who has no hope and scarcely an opportunity of becoming better, will, as a general rule, practise no prudential restraint whatever.

Mr. Mill also holds what is less obvious, that a very great increase in the comforts of the population, though it may be

[1] This was the original Malthusian doctrine, though its author much modified it in the later editions of the *Essay on Population*. Ricardo, however, who thought himself a Malthusian, asserts it in terms (*Works*, p. 248, Ed. M'Culloch), and everywhere tacitly or avowedly reasons on the assumption of it.

an immediate stimulus to population, will nevertheless in all likelihood, on the whole, retard its increase. This proposition was admirably brought into view by Mr. Thornton, in his essay on Over-Population. It is still, however, opposed by many reasoners; there is in the minds of some Economists an inveterate idea, almost, if not quite, amounting to a prejudice, to the effect that the most comfortable classes will always increase the most rapidly. If this proposition were not a frequent assumption, silently or expressly taken for granted in many influential arguments, it would have no intrinsic merit requiring a particular notice. Few ideas on this or on any other subject can be more clearly opposed to very obvious facts. It might be urged that in Norway, where the population is nearly stationary, the mass of the population enjoy a degree of comfort certainly unsurpassed, and most probably unequalled, in any other portion of Europe. But far more obvious facts are in every country at hand to correct this very erroneous idea. Is it by the increase of the *Noblesse* that the population of any country is particularly augmented? Do the middle, the opulent, or the commercial portions of any nation increase too rapidly? It is clear that, as we ascend in the social scale, we pass through classes which have at each step of ascent a diminishing rate of increase; the fact being that comfort, the habitual sense of having something valuable to lose, and the desire of parents that their children shall not be below, but, if possible, above the position in which they themselves live, are all motives which operate most as a check on population among the opulent and comfortable classes.

This being so, it is clear that it is the habit of the several classes of mankind to have a rate of increase of their own, fairly determined by the desire of not falling themselves and not allowing their children to fall below the condition which they themselves have been used to occupy. As a consequence of this, it is contended, as we think justly, that though a large improvement in the condition of the people might be attended with an immediate acceleration in the rate of increase, yet the next generation would grow up in habits which they would be unwilling to forfeit by a general system of improvident

marriage. As a practical question, Mr. Mill thinks that no prudential restraint is practised by the agricultural labourers, and that, if the increase of population were in the hands of that class only, the English people would increase as fast as the American. So that there can be no ground for saying that an increase of comfort would, in our case, at least, diminish the providence of the labouring class. On the means by which Mr. Mill would effect this desirable change we shall speak hereafter, and at present shall only add, that he would very largely increase the funds expended on national education, so as to obtain, if possible, not only the economic, but also the moral and intellectual requisites of a provident population.

As to the general doctrine, that a great increase in the comforts of the labouring classes is often a check to the increase of their numbers, it fortunately happens that there is a case in point to which Mr. Mill has an opportunity of appealing. An immense increase in the comforts of the French peasantry was, it is well known, an immediate consequence of their first Revolution. Over and above this, the depopulation and extra demand for labour caused by the wars of Napoleon were all circumstances tending to raise the rate of wages, and, therefore, according to the vulgar doctrine, to stimulate population. Yet the fact has been, that the increased comfort and the new distribution of landed property have produced a slackened increase of population, and that the French population increases very much more slowly than the average rate of European nations.

We have purposely used language which implies our assent to this portion of Mr. Mill's doctrine. It is not, however, to be looked upon as a principle which, like a physical law, will certainly operate with an unvarying energy under all times and circumstances. The multiplicity of motives that incline men to contract marriages render the theory of population the most complex part of elementary political economy; the conclusions of science upon it are as yet very rough and general. Particular cases of natural habit and unlooked-for conjunctures of events may well render futile the best adjusted theory of human action. On this special subject political

economy is more vague than perhaps it need be; but all that it can ever do is to indicate general rules; and no one can ever be exempted from the necessity of studying each case that occurs in practice with a due attention to disturbing agencies. On this particular point we may say that it is considerably more likely than not that a general increase of habitual comfort will slacken the advance of population, but not that it will do so of necessity and invariably.

In this chapter of Mr. Mill's book, and also in some other parts of it, there seems to us to be a want of concise formulæ summing up and stamping on the memory the previous proof and explanation. We cannot attempt here fully to supply this deficiency; but we will set down a few brief sentences for the consideration of others. We do not mean that none of the principles which we are about to mention can be reduced to more elementary considerations; but we wish to see drawn out a set of intermediate principles to obviate the tiresome necessity of a continual resort to the first assumptions and axioms of science. It should be remembered that the founders of both the great schools of logic have combined to teach that in the skilful use of those *axiomata media* consists the practical utility of knowledge. It may then be perhaps said: First, That misery so extreme as to cause disease and death is an obvious check to the increase of population. Secondly, That extreme degrees of misery short of this stimulate population by producing recklessness; in technical Malthusian language, this is expressed by saying that the positive and preventive check never act together in any force. Thirdly, That the greatest economical preventive check on population is the desire of not falling in consequence of marriage into a state of society lower than that which when unmarried they have been accustomed to occupy; and next in efficiency is the desire that their children shall not occupy a position in life inferior to their own. Fourthly, That these desires, at least among the industrial classes, increase with amount of comfort enjoyed. Fifthly, That improvements in the condition of a people sufficient to raise the habitual standard of comfort act as a check, and, not like smaller improvements, as a stimulus to the in-

crease of population; and the converse principle that an accession of misery and discomfort sufficient to depreciate that standard will be an incentive and not a check to such an increase. Sixthly, That the desire of preserving their own condition is a more and more efficacious preservative against over-population in proportion as persons feel that their own condition is dependent on themselves and not on others; and so also the desire for children's welfare strengthens proportionably to the certainty of the children's condition being dependent on the conduct of their own parents and not on the actions of other people.

This last consideration of the absence of uncertainty is a point on which Sismondi has powerfully enlarged in various of his writings. It is a great reason with him for preferring the status of a peasant proprietor to that of a hired labourer. The latter is at the mercy of the speculations of capitalists and the vicissitudes of commerce. Without knowing why, his trade may be depressed for years; neither his prosperity nor his adversity are of his own creation. Very different is the position of a peasantry who have a footing on the soil—if each man can cultivate his own land thoroughly, his position is secured; as he cannot be ruined by the conduct of others, his comfort is not dependent on either capitalist or landlord; he may suffer from the elements and from Providence, but so far as man is concerned, he has within reach the "Saxon Utopia," a fair day's wages for a fair day's work.

Very similar is the effect of the two systems on population. A peasant proprietor feels that his children will certainly descend in the scale of society if his freehold be at his death divided among a numerous family. He either therefore does not have so many children, or he saves a fund out of which those who do not inherit the land may be provided for. He knows how many persons his land will maintain, and for how many he is likely to have other funds. It is of no importance at all to him what others of his class may do; if he is himself provident, the condition of his children is in the main secure. This kind of causes keeps the population of Norway, as the returns show, very nearly stationary. Far

different is the position of a country like England where the lower orders are mere hired labourers, possessing, as a rule, no accumulated capital. All this class knows is that they are dependent on the present position of the labour-market, and that their children will be in like manner dependent on its future condition. Each individual feels that the number of *his* children is but a slight point in determining the condition of each. He has no reason at all to think that if he has only one child that one will necessarily or probably be better off than if he have a dozen. This depends on the conduct of the whole class to which he belongs, and he has no data, and at present no mental ability, to determine what that conduct is likely to be.

A capitalist, it should be observed, is in a position exactly similar to that of the peasant proprietor. If he can leave each of his children the amount with which he started in life, he has every reason to think that they will on an average be in a position not inferior to his own. It is no matter to him that his neighbours are not equally saving: if his children have capital they will not be worse, but possibly better off for their neighbours not being possessed of it too. This certainly is a main element in producing the providence in marriage, which perhaps even to an unfavourable extent is characteristic of the middle classes in England.

From this it is clear that if the working classes could be raised to a state in which saving was a preliminary to marriage there would be an efficacious obstacle to their reckless and indefinite increase. If dependence on mere wages could in any way be superseded by the habit of saving for themselves and for their children, if the working classes could be brought within the range of the motives which now act on the rest of the community, we might confidently anticipate a great immediate improvement in their physical condition. It is consolatory to remember that this is one of the points on which purely intellectual education is really most serviceable. Instruction is to the mind what the telescope is to the eye. To an uncultivated intellect what is distant will always be invisible, but a well-trained mind is habitually able to look into

the future, and to deal with the absent as though it were present. It is to be hoped, and perhaps expected, that the present exertions for the spread of education will not fail in a few years to increase materially the forethought of the labouring classes.

Yet by itself this intellectual improvement will not be sufficient. Before people can save, they must have a surplus to save out of. It will be necessary to raise the conditions of the lower orders considerably above their present condition before they will become habitually a saving class. In the middle ranks a small amount of self-restraint will make a considerable difference both in their property and in their social position: but it would take much more than can be expected of mankind generally to make much improvement in the condition of the lower orders. Hesiod's proverb that the half is more than the whole, amounts in Economics to saying, that the smaller the income the harder it is to save any given proportion of it.

Mr. Mill, however, we must pause to observe, is of opinion that population will be checked in a somewhat different manner. He expects that there will arise an unfavourable popular sentiment against those who overstock the labour market, and that operating as a penalty, this feeling will diminish the number of such offenders. We will not assert that this is impossible. Mr. Mill has pronounced that all who deny it are profoundly ignorant of the true motives of human action. When the teacher gets dogmatical, the learner becomes nervous, and we feel therefore inclined to be cautious. We only wish to observe, that there is as yet no sufficient basis of fact for us to look upon it as a very well-established doctrine. We doubt also if the act of overstocking the labour market be an act sufficiently marked and definite to excite popular reprobation. Mr. Mill admits that no such feeling anywhere exists now, not even where there is the greater amount of this sort of restraint; but as in these countries the labouring population are mainly peasant proprietors, there is no occasion and indeed no opportunity for any such popular sentiment. We can understand that where saving is an

habitual preliminary to marriage, those will be looked down upon and disliked who neglect it. As to much more than this we are inclined to be sceptical. We do not know enough to speak confidently as to the factory population; but though we are not used to be over-timid in theorising, we are not bold enough to expect anything at all like this of English agricultural labourers. At all events it is safer and more practical to assert that the existence of a strong saving habit among the lower classes is both a necessary and a sufficient condition of their economical welfare.

We have now discussed the subject of the growth of Capital and the increase of Population. In the course of the discussion we omitted avowedly to consider two questions: What is the cause which divides Capital into its two distinct divisions? secondly, What are the causes regulating the rate of profit? We shall now discuss the former, which as we stated is omitted by our author. The latter it will be expedient still further to postpone.

We do not here enjoy the benefit of Mr. Mill's guidance, but the problem does not appear to contain any peculiar difficulty. It is a principle in the theory of value, that articles producible at equal cost will be supplied in proportion to the demand for them: those most in demand will be most in number; those least in demand will be fewest in supply. For if the supply of any should fall short of this proportion, their price will rise, and an extra profit will be obtained by the producer, in consequence of which capital will be attracted to the employment, and the supply will be augmented. This principle applies to the case before us. The respective amounts in which equally costly portions of the two kinds of capital are supplied, will be determined by the demand for each. The demand for remunerative capital depends on the rate of remuneration (which will be discussed presently), multiplied by the number of labourers employed at that rate. The demand for the co-operative sort of capital depends on its efficiency in satisfying existing wants. If new discoveries in machinery make that portion of capital able to supply more readily any desirable articles, profit will be higher in the improved depart-

ment of industry, and an increased portion of the annual savings of the country will be attracted towards it. Improvements in machinery may therefore be detrimental to the working classes, by drawing off some capital which would have been devoted to their maintenance to aid the production of commodities which they have no opportunity of consuming. All improvements which increase the supply of wages-paying commodities are of course beneficial to the labourer. It may also happen that as all machinery requires labour to work it, the demand for the latter may be a benefit compensating the labourer for the harm done in the way which we have pointed out. Other advantages of machinery might also be named, but each of them are consistent with saying that an increase in the efficiency of machinery may affect the distribution of capital between its divisions in a manner detrimental to the working classes.

The rate of remuneration has been mentioned above as a cause influential in deciding how much of a country's capital shall be remunerative, and how much co-operative. It has been shown in our remarks on Population, under how many limitations it is true there is a certain amount of commodities which the lower classes will be content to receive, and without which they will not continue to increase. It has been shown that this minimum of remuneration is of two sorts, one physical, which is the minimum that will keep alive the existing number of labourers; secondly, a moral minimum, susceptible under proper circumstances both of increase and diminution. Now it is clear that if the demand for labour be unaltered, it is essential to the industry of the country that the working classes shall have the physical minimum of wages; and also that unless circumstances occur to depreciate the moral standard, they will receive what that standard metes out to them.

Although Mr. Mill has not inquired into the causes which determine how much capital shall take the form of wages-paying commodities, he has repeatedly declared his belief that the labouring classes will in general enjoy the comforts accompanying this latter variable minimum of remuneration.

He has also in some places gone further, and attempted to show that they cannot permanently receive more. He has indeed an entire chapter on popular remedies for low wages, which is devoted to the elucidation of this opinion. The popular remedies to which he refers are those in which law or public opinion affords a higher remuneration to labour than would be given by unrestricted competition. Mr. Mill teaches that such laws or customs must be wholly inoperative. He appears to think that there is a *primâ facie* absurdity in attempting to support more labourers than the "capital" of the country will maintain, or to give the same number of labourers a large recompense for their exertions. Now if, as certain economists are prone to assume, all capital were of one sort, and if it could be used only for production, and were not consumable by unproductive consumers, if, in short, by some law of nature capital could only be used in supporting labourers, this argument would certainly be a good one. Nature would in that case have enacted that the remuneration shall be of such and such an amount, and no human legislature could go further, or impair her work.

But since remunerative capital can be consumed by unproductive consumers, this argument will not hold. If wages were raised 10 per cent. by law, wages-paying commodities would rise in price, and the more opulent consumers would probably restrict their consumption, and labourers would command more of the existing supply. Moreover, the rise of price would cause an increased production of wages-paying commodities. Capital which was going to be employed in manufacturing steam engines or plate, or some such articles, would be employed in agriculture, or in preparing the coarser kinds of manufacture which are used by labourers. Capital would be shifted from the manufacture of luxuries for the opulent to the production of necessaries for the indigent. How much the labouring classes would gain would depend on the agricultural circumstances of the time. If the new application of capital to the land only yielded such a return as would keep the price at the level which it occupied when the law came into operation, the labouring classes would obviously gain

still exactly what they gained in that year, and no more. If, on the other hand, food could be supplied at the price it occupied previous to the enactment of the new law, it is obvious also that the labourers would gain by the full amount in which the law raised their pecuniary resources; the price would be as before, and their money-wages would be greater. In general, something intermediate between these two cases would happen; the labourer would gain more than in the first, and less than in the second. But in either case such a law would be advantageous to labourers: and in relation to all remunerative commodities except food, the most favourable contingency is almost certain to happen.

We do not defend such a law; not only because it could not be worked in any known system of industry, but also because it could not be urged on the capitalist as a duty to give so much additional wages. Something must be known of his position in life, his duties to his family and those dependent upon him, before any such principle could be affirmed. But it seems to us obvious that capitalists ought not to beat down labourers to the lowest possible amount. They have no more right to be greedy and avaricious than any other class; and it is discreditable in economists to teach that such conduct is not hurtful to the public and indefensible in itself.

The effect of such a law on population is a distinct question. Ricardo would of course assume that if it were for the benefit of the lower orders it would stimulate their increase, and wages would be reduced to their former standard. Even so, the wages-fund of the country is increased, the rate of remuneration is the same, but the persons paid are more. Mr. Mill reasons here after the manner of Ricardo. Nor do we pretend to say that any such law or custom could of itself and alone raise the rate of wages materially. But it may be one of many concurrent agencies in so raising it, and its existence may prevent its decline by counteracting other agencies that may be depreciating the labourer's habitual standard of comfort; and therefore might be rather a check on population than a stimulus to it.

On the whole, therefore, as to the rate of remuneration, it may be said, without wearying our readers by unnecessary details, first, that when the demand for labour is unaltered, the physical minimum must be maintained; secondly, that moral minimum will always be maintained when the demand for labour is not much raised and much diminished, or when the supply of wages-paying commodities does not become much more easy or more difficult; thirdly, that the benevolence of the higher classes answers all the purposes of an extra demand for labour. These are the main principles regulating the rate of remuneration. The proportion between wages-paying and what may be called instrumental capital is settled, as has been seen by the demand for each sort; the demand for the first varying directly as the rate of remuneration multiplied by the number of labourers employed: the demand for the second being determined by the productive power of machinery in ministering to human wants.

Reviewing therefore what has been said, we find that we have considered the demand and supply of remunerative capital, and under the head of population we have discussed the supply of labour. The demand for labour, the only remaining factor of our original formula, will not perhaps detain us long. It depends as a whole on the power which each single act of immediate labour possesses to satisfy human wants, multiplied by the number of such acts which are desired. From this it is clear that it is more beneficial to the lower classes to be employed in quickly-recurring acts, than in acts which when once done do not require any second or at all events any but a deferred repetition. The pyramids of Egypt once built, no one cared about the builders: and it is to be feared they were put on reduced rations of onions. This is the ground of a part of the truth implied in Ricardo's doctrine, that it was better for labourers that capital should be laid out in services than in commodities. Supposing that the labourer sold the commodities, this would only be true when the service required more frequent repetition than the acts necessary to the production of the commodities. When the capitalist sells the commodity, as is now most usual, it is not

so good, if we look only to the interest of the labourers, to buy the article as to employ labour more directly; since the capitalist will not always, or indeed often employ the whole purchase-money for their benefit.

We have, therefore, now pretty nearly solved the problem with which we set out, namely, what under present circumstances regulates the rate of wages? We found that this was determined temporarily by the supply and demand for remunerative capital as compared with supply of labour and the demand for it. We have now inquired, so far as our limits will allow, what are the causes permanently determining the supply and demand both for remunerative capital and for labour. One problem has been omitted, *viz.* the cause of determining the rate of profit, and these will even now be treated of more conveniently hereafter.

We are now, therefore, able to go on to discuss Mr. Mill's plans for the benefit of the lower orders. The difficulty is, that the rate of wages is so low; and the great problem for European and especially for English statesmen in the nineteenth century is, how shall that rate be raised, and how shall the lower orders be improved.

Whatever be the evil or the good of democracy, in itself it is evident that the combination of democracy and low wages will infallibly be bad. In all ages the rulers of mankind have for the most part agreed in having a predominating inclination for making themselves comfortable. If power be given to a miserable democracy, that democracy will above all things endeavour not to be miserable. This it will attempt by whatever schemes are congenial to minds and consciences, corrupted by ages of hereditary ignorance and hereditary suffering. And woe to those who, under such a Government, propound plans for the benefit of their rulers: *Sævi proximis ingruunt.* The favourite theorist of yesterday is punished to-day because the Millennium is not yet come. Such is the lesson which the annals of Europe in the year 1848 teach to English statesmen. The only effectual security against the rule of an ignorant, miserable, and vicious democracy, is to take care that the democracy shall be educated, and comfort-

able, and moral. Now is the time for scheming, deliberating, and acting. To tell a mob how their condition may be improved is talking hydrostatics to the ocean. Science is of use now because she may be heard and understood. If she be not heard before the democracy come, when it is come her voice will be drowned in the uproar.

So great and so urgent is in our judgment the importance of plans for the improvement of the working classes: we regret, therefore, that so much of our space has been taken up with the explanation of the existing state of things in England, that we must be brief in our account of Mr. Mill's schemes for the elevation of the labouring classes. He has schemes for both England and Ireland; and we will take the latter first.

The economical condition of Ireland is probably far worse than that of any other country possessing equal natural advantages. The rate of wages scarcely comes up to the minimum that will support life, and falls far short of that needful to maintain the human body in full working strength. The land tenure appears to be about the worst possible. It has nearly all the disadvantages both of *la grande* and *la petite culture*, without any of their corresponding advantages. This tenure is known as the cottier system, which Mr. Mill has here defined as the system in which the peasant rents by competition only, and not at all by fixed custom. It is not difficult to see, that in a country with a rapidly increasing population, and but a little non-agricultural employment, a great preponderance of such a land tenure ensures the utter misery of the labouring classes. Land is, in such a country, the first necessary of life, and the landlords have a monopoly of it. The peasants will promise to pay *any* rent in order to obtain possession of the soil. This nominal rent they will be unable to pay, and the landlord will take whatever more is produced than is necessary to give the tenant a bare subsistence. As population increases, the competition strengthens; the rents increase in amount, the tenant is more and more oppressed with debt, and he has to work harder and harder in order to obtain the most meagre sustenance. Necessaries are

being bartered for luxuries, and those who need the former are at the mercy of those who possess them. It is obvious that what has been described as the prevalent practice of Irish landlords is morally unjustifiable. We do not charge all the Irish landlords with abetting such a system. The better part of them do not take into account the biddings of the peasants in settling the rent, but act on their own notion of what he is able and ought to pay: yet though the evidence taken before Lord Devon's Commission shows that such more respectable landlords are not absolutely few, it seems also certain that they form an inconsiderable fraction of the whole rent-owning class. The ownership of land, however, gives no moral title to inflict suffering on its occupants. The landlord under this system takes habitually a cruel advantage of the necessities of the poor; and that such can be the constant course of events in a Christian country, shows how little the Jewish Prophets are heeded by those who profess at least to acknowledge their authority.

The question then arises, how are these cottiers to be got rid of? No man defends them; but it is difficult to devise plans for introducing a better system. Mr. Mill's answer is that a large number of them may be provided for by making them peasant proprietors. There are in round numbers a million and a half[1] of waste lands in Ireland, which there is every reason to think would repay tillage. This land is now lying useless, and it does seem a very obvious course to bring it into

[1] The exact numbers are:—

	Cultivable.	*Fit for Pasture.*
Leinster . . .	186,000	345,000
Ulster . . .	419,000	629,000
Connaught . . .	430,000	726,000
Munster . . .	390,000	630,000
Total	1,425,000	2,330,000

This is not the calculation of a theorist, but the estimate of Mr. Griffith the land-valuer for the Irish land-tax, who is not in any way pledged to the waste-land scheme. The figures are given in the report of Lord Devon's Commission.

cultivation. To any such scheme as Mr. Mill's there is, however, a strong dislike in very many English minds. It seems to us that the evils of Ireland have created a prejudice against this their appropriate remedy. An inveterate idea prevails that the existence of small holdings is the cause of Irish misery, and that the scheme of peasant proprietorship is a mode of perpetuating the existing system of land tenure. We feel sure that this is a fair statement of much influential opinion. But yet both these two propositions are ridiculously untrue. It is not the smallness of the holdings that is the cause of the evils of Ireland; for in Ulster, where the condition of Irish society is far better than elsewhere, the division of land is more minute than in any other portion of the country. Again, the system which now prevails is one of rack rents, where all surplus beyond the bare subsistence of the tenant goes of necessity to the landlord; the system proposed as a remedy is, that in some cases no rent at all should be paid; and in the case of more fertile soil, that a fixed sum should be reserved, a system which would obviously give the tenant a secure enjoyment of whatever surplus produce his industry might exact from the soil. Is there any connection therefore between the existing system and that proposed as a remedy for it? In the one the main feature is unlimited exaction; in the other the main feature is the fixity of the quit rent which is to be paid. This point of fixity is one which Mr. Mill has in all its bearings admirably elucidated, and as it seems to us with very great originality.

The only other remedy proposed for Ireland is the wholesale eviction system. Some persons who wish to adapt Ireland in all respects to the model of England have wished to introduce large tillage farms, and to make day labourers of the lower classes. We have before given some reason, and Mr. Mill has collected almost demonstrative evidence, that on grounds principally derived from the theory of population a nation of peasant proprietors is much preferable to one of hired agricultural labourers. But, putting this aside, there is strong reason peculiar to the individual case for preferring to introduce into Ireland the system of peasant proprietors. The

Poor Law Commissioners for Ireland state "that agricultural wages vary from sixpence to one shilling a day; that the average of the country in general is about 8½d., and that the earnings of labourers come, on an average, to from 2s. to 2s. 6d. a week or thereabouts". Now the number of the cottier population is exceedingly large, and it is evident that the addition of anything like it to the number of hired labourers would bring down the rate of wages enormously. It is obvious that, bad as the cottier system may be, this remedy for it is worse than the disease. Wages are now 2s. 6d. a week; what will they be after a great reduction?

It is said that capital will come from England to employ the additional labourers. But Mr. Mill justly replies that capital will not come from England until the social state of the lower classes is improved, and therefore if we adopt the scheme of large farms we are forced on the dilemma that capital will not come till the people are improved, and that the people will not be improved before the capital comes. Also there is no likelihood that a sufficient amount of capital would come. The Poor Law Commissioners state that there are in Ireland five agricultural labourers to the extent of soil which employs two in Great Britain. It is obvious that if the agriculture of Ireland is assimilated to that of England, this immense surplus of labourers would be thrown out of employment.

Moreover, the system of peasant proprietors has been tried in Ireland and has worked well. There exists in Ulster a kind of incipient copyhold, from which a tenant at will cannot be turned out so long as he pays a fixed customary rent. From this it is an obvious consequence that the consent of the occupying tenant must be purchased before a new one can have possession of the soil. It is this institution of tenant-right which has made the people of Ulster so superior to those in other parts of Ireland. They have this system because being English and Scotch they were a better race of people in the beginning; but peculiarities of race act not by magic, but by creating social habits and institutions: the cause of a well-

organised industry when it is not improved from without must always be an appropriate disposition of the industrious classes, yet it is not the less true that the happiness of the labourers results immediately from the beneficial organisation. Hence it appears that the institution which it is proposed to extend has been already tried and has succeeded admirably.

As to the effect of peasant proprietorship on Irish population, there is every reason to believe that the class of people whom we are now concerned with practice no prudential restraint whatever, and there can therefore be no reason for saying that any new system will be productive of increased improvidence. It has also been shown that Mr. Mill has ground for saying that, against over-population, peasant proprietorship is the best preservative yet known. But, besides these two weighty considerations, there is reason to prefer this system to that of hired labourers, because Government may lay down rules to preserve the integrity of properties, and these rules may act as a check on population over and above the natural effects of peasant proprietorship. These rules should be enforced because "brute custom" is of great force in matters of population, and habits of improvidence cannot be suddenly eradicated. But on the opposite plan of replacing the cottiers by hired labourers, no check at all would be put to the increase of population; the labourers would be abandoned entirely to their own control, and as they most likely would not become a saving class, they would in all likelihood soon be no better off than at present, although we grant the false assumption that their condition would for a brief period be improved. On this account, therefore, we should hold that, whether or not the nominal proprietorship should be reserved for the Government, it would be certainly advisable to keep a watch over the subdivision of properties exactly as is now done by the more intelligent and respectable of Irish landlords.

These arguments are, it is obvious, quite independent of any opinion on the intrinsic merits of the small system of cultivation. All that it is necessary to show for our present

purpose is, that there is no such enormous evil in the small system of cultivation as to overbalance that good which we hope would accrue from the institution of peasant proprietorship. Mr. Mill's judgment seems, however, to us so admirable on this point, that we will sum it up and present it to our readers; a study of it will serve to remove from the minds of many economists those opinions which, where they are not mere prejudices, are conclusions drawn from a very limited and exceptional experience. Mr. Mill's conclusions are, that the small system is a social nuisance when the rent is unfixed, and can be raised in consequence of the improvement of the property, and that it does more harm than good when the properties are too small to employ the whole time of the proprietor and those dependent on him; when the property is too small to give the owner a full security against any probable accidents of crop; and also that this system wastes much time when the properties do not lie in one place, but are divided into smaller holdings, between which the tenant has often to go to and fro. Also that in the case of crops not requiring very minute attention, the same labour will extract from the same land a greater return under the large system of cultivation, but that the small system will yield a larger gross produce than the large to the same number of hands employed, because of the greater industry and forethought which are developed in the minds of the peasant proprietors by the certain hope of enjoying the fruits of their own labour.

It is a consequence of this last proposition that the surplus produce available for supporting a non-agricultural population will be greater under a system of peasant proprietor than under any system of large farms on which the hired labourers are equally well fed. It is out of this surplus that all the most valuable portions of the community—all those whose trade it is to instruct, govern, and educate the community—are for the most part subsisted. When, therefore, the agricultural population have a fair share of comfort, this surplus is the real test of the advantages or disadvantages accruing from any agricultural system, but in any other case it is no test at all. There is no advantage but much evil is giving the labourers

(as is done in Somerset [1] and Wiltshire) less food than will keep men in full working condition, in order that a large surplus may be left to support non-agricultural classes. Large masses of men are always degraded morally by extreme physical suffering. In matter of fact a large portion of this surplus is expended on the producers of luxuries and on those non-productive classes who do nothing either for the wealth or the improvement of the community, and it is preposterous to benefit these at the expense of a more useful class. But even if the whole surplus were expended on the education of the community, it would be no adequate compensation for the moral degradation of a large portion of those who are to be educated. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox which treadeth out the corn" is the true rule of Economics, and it is disgraceful that thinkers enough are found to hold and imply, if not in terms to state, a different doctrine.

On the whole, therefore, there is no ground for universally preferring the large system of cultivation, which, indeed, appears to be more beneficial only where it is necessary to enforce the utmost economy of labour. There is, therefore, no objection arising from the theory of agriculture against introducing the small system into Ireland. We have advanced strong positive reasons almost wholly derived from Mr. Mill's work, for recommending their immediate introduction: we have only to add on this point, that if the waste lands should prove insufficient to provide for the whole of the cottier population, Mr. Mill would turn their present holdings, under proper restrictions as to size, into farms, at a fair quit-rent, tendering of course to the proprietors of the soil the fair market-value of the land; a measure which assumes no more powers over the soil than an ordinary railway bill, and which is certainly justifiable if experience should prove it to be necessary.

Such is Mr. Mill's remedy for Ireland. For England he

[1] Mr. Thornton, the best authority on the subject, states that recruiting-sergeants find a marked difference of muscular strength between the south-west of England and the better-fed counties of the north and east (*Over-population*, p. 24).

has two remedies: one, which we will mention first, is designed to modify the intense and angry feeling of competition between labourers and capitalists that is observable at present. This is the scheme which was first recommended for general adoption by Mr. Babbage, and which, according to Mr. Mill, has been tried with excellent results both in America and in France, and also in this country for a long time past, in the Northern Whale Fisheries and the Cornish Mines. It essentially consists in making the workman the partner of the capitalist; in other words, it is proposed to pay them not a fixed salary but a proportion of the profits. We need not here dwell much on the merits of this scheme because it was not long since discussed in this review by one more competent to the task. Its merits chiefly consist in giving the labourers an interest in the success of their work. From this it would ensue that industry would be stimulated and the gross produce be augmented both of manufacture and agriculture. A good feeling between labourers and capitalists would also facilitate all productive operations; and on this account there is every reason to believe that the adoption of this plan would raise to some extent the remuneration of labour, because the fund out of which labourers are paid would be greater than under the present system. But it is not in the least likely that this alteration in the mode of paying wages would in itself be adequate to meet the present difficulty. It may be doubted whether a plan could not be devised as a development of this scheme for combining the advantages both of the large and the small systems of cultivation, and also for making the condition of children as exclusively dependent on the actions of their parents, as is the case with the children of peasant proprietors. But whether this be so or not, it is clear the present rate of wages is too low to be sufficiently raised by any improvement in the mechanism of distribution. The additional amount produced would be quite insufficient to effect so great a change as is necessary.

Mr. Mill has therefore provided another scheme more capable of producing great and immediate effect. This remedy is a large scheme of Emigration. He recommends the trans-

plantation of a number of labourers large enough to change the standard of comfort in which the remainder would live, and in which the next generation would be habitually reared. This plan is not to be confounded with that recommended by *The Times* newspaper, and extensively countenanced by many influential persons. This latter scheme apparently contemplates an annual emigration as a permanent outlet for the overflow of the population. This latter will not remedy the present state of the lower classes, though it might keep one which was always good from any deterioration. Mr. Mill's scheme, on the other hand, is designed for the elevation of the lower orders as a whole. It will be evident that we are in constancy bound to maintain that no objections from the theory of population could be raised to this scheme, because we have laid down that large alterations in the standard of comfort generally raise what has been called the moral minimum of wages.

The only other important difficulty likely to be started is the expense, and this Mr. Mill has a theory to encounter. He remarks that it is of no consequence that taxation entrench on the capital of a country, if the capital appropriated by Government were about to expatriate itself on account of a prevailing low rate of profit. If Government borrow the money, the process is that the coming of a new trustworthy borrower into the market raises the rate of interest and keeps capital at home. If the amount is raised by taxation, the effect is, that a certain portion of capital which was on its way to the loan-market, and from thence to foreign countries, is intercepted by the Government, and transferred to purposes of a national instead of individual utility. In the case of England this argument certainly applies. It is a fact of experience that when the interest of money[1] is 2 per cent. capital habitually emigrates, or, what is here the same thing, is wasted on foolish speculations, which never yield any adequate return. It would clearly be no national loss if this capital were appropriated by the Government for national purposes: the best mode, perhaps, being to take it direct from capital on a terminable annuity of

[1] See *Fullerton on the Currency*, p. 161.

thirty years' duration. So that Mr. Mill has clearly answered those Economists and Manchester manufacturers who exclaim against entrenching on the National Capital for any purpose, however philanthropic. He has shown, by an argument which is so obvious when seen, as to disguise the merit of seeing it, that there exists an ample fund out of which all the higher interests of State can be satisfied, without diminishing the permanent opulence of the country. Nor is there any service so much needed from a political philosopher at the present time.

This argument, though weighty as it stands, cannot be fully appreciated, except by taking into account one or two general circumstances affecting the rate of profit, the consideration of which we accordingly postponed until the present time. The first of these propositions is, that an unlimited amount of capital cannot be employed in an old country without a diminution of the rate of profit. It has been shown that an increase of co-operative capital is of necessity accompanied by some increase of remunerative, because machinery cannot be worked without manual labour, and the extra demand for labour will require more funds to compensate for its exertion. But a large portion of remunerative capital consists of food, which as we have seen requires the application of capital to land under circumstances which in any fixed condition of the productive arts reduce the rate of return in proportion as the capital expended is from time to time augmented. The price of corn therefore rises, and it may be assumed that either the physical minimum of wages exists and must be maintained, or that the moral minimum exists and will be maintained. In either of these cases, the money-wages of labour must rise or the real remuneration of labour will fall off. Moreover, it is clear that if money-wages rise, and the price of commodities do not rise also, profits must fall. The capitalist has more to pay for getting his work done, and he has also less for himself in consequence. That prices cannot rise is clear, because the cause here assigned acts, with an exception here unimportant, equally on all employments. If money were produced in the country, the wages of the miners would rise, as well as the wages of other labourers, or the same cause which is supposed to operate

to raise the value of commodities, as compared with money, is equally operative to raise the value of money as compared with commodities. It is obvious that no circumstance can change the relative value of two commodities which affect equally the supply of both, and does not at all affect the demand for either.

Therefore with an increase of capital it is proved that there must be an increase of food; that an increase of food is most frequently accompanied by an increased cost of hand work,[1] and that an increased outlay on manual labour will be accompanied by a diminution of profit.

This assumes that the industrial arts undergo no improvement sufficient to compensate for the inferior return from poorer soils, and to prevent the price of food from rising. Mr. Mill is of opinion that in general the progress of industrial improvement is a less powerful force than the necessity of resorting to inferior land. The price of food from century to century is the obvious criterion of this fact, if only money be of an unaltered cost. Taking into account any deranging circumstances affecting the rate of wages, it is also clear that the history of the rate of interest will be an adequate indication of the forces respectively exerted by each of these two antagonistic agencies. The history of the rate of interest in England has yet to be written, and therefore we cannot find any complete test, by which to discover the relative progress of these two forces. Few subjects so interesting to a philosopher yet remain so thoroughly uninvestigated.

The obvious bearing of this theory on the emigration of capital is, that since the rate of profit is being gradually lowered in an old country, sometimes it will come to a point at which persons will rather seek a higher rate abroad. There

[1] What we call in the text the art of work or hand work, is usually called the cost of labour; but this phrase expresses naturally the rate of a labourer's wages per diem. The only use of a special phrase is to mark that the labourer is concerned with what he gets as pay for a given exertion during a given time, *i.e.* his wages; and that the capitalist is concerned with the result of that exertion, *i.e.* the work done. The common phrase seems to us to fail signally in working out this distinction.

is always a certain minimum rate for anything below which persons will not think it worth while to accumulate. That minimum varies indeed with the habits of a people, yet in any one generation there is a point beyond which it will not go; and there is obviously a minimum beyond which it will not go at all. In an old country like England this minimum rate will not bear much reduction, and therefore we must contentedly look for the emigration of capital, and, what is worse to the world, though nationally the same, its destruction by foolish speculations, of which commercial crises are the inevitable results.

Hence it is clear that there will be in this country, for many years, a fund from which the higher purposes of Government may be achieved without entrenching on the support of the labouring people or the real opulence of the nation. In reference to the Emigration scheme, it may be said, that the effect of Government interference simply is to determine, that capital, which was going to leave the country, shall go to that particular foreign country to which the labourer has been removed. It was before fixed that capital should emigrate: the direction of that migration is settled by the operations of Government. On such grounds as these, therefore, Mr. Mill contends that his scheme if adopted is in the highest degree beneficial. It is greatly preferable to any that we have ever seen proposed for remedying the economical wants of the lower classes; and its adoption is in our judgment the very best measure open to the selection of an English Government. To us it seems the best attainable means of attaining a necessary condition of all future social improvement.

We have now arrived at the end of our long labour. We have discussed the circumstances now affecting the condition of the labouring classes, and also the schemes proposed for their advantage. Of Mr. Mill's speculations on this subject we have shown ourselves no lukewarm admirers. And on this account we are at liberty to say that his chapter on the future conditions of the labouring classes very much disappointed us. The lower orders are there treated as if they were beings of pure intellect. We do not for a moment deny

that it is of great consequence to give the working classes intellectual cultivation, and to develop in their minds a relish for intellectual pleasures, yet we also think that the peculiar qualities of Mr. Mill's mind have led him to assign to such considerations a space out of proportion to their importance. The most important matters for the labouring classes, as for all others, are restraining discipline over their passions and an effectual culture of their conscience. In recent times these wants are more pressing than ever. Great towns are depots of temptation, and, unless care be taken, corrupters of all deep moral feelings. The passions also act with more violence than elsewhere in the intervals of a monotonous occupation, and owing to the increasing division of labour the industrial tasks of mankind are every day becoming more and more monotonous. To these considerations Mr. Mill has not alluded, nor has he enlarged on the dangers of that union between democracy and low wages which in our view make his plans for the elevation of the populace of such urgent and practical interest. If Mr. Mill had been a mere political economist, no blame would have attached to him. But he considers, besides the abstract and isolated consequences of the mere desire for wealth, the application also of these consequences, with all necessary corrections, to the real world of human action. He was therefore bound to have noticed the deeper considerations we have named, and to have neglected to notice them is an omission not less unpleasing because decidedly congenial to a purely intellectual and secular thinker.

And now as we are in the act of concluding our remarks on this admirable work, it is full time to mention what is perhaps its most peculiar merit. It has been well remarked that a writer on detached points in a science need only show his reader where he has succeeded: the author of a systematic treatise must also show them where he has failed. The latter must follow the course of his subject, though it lead him to problems which he fails to solve—the former by selecting his favourite points may easily conceal from his readers that he has ever been vanquished at all. The most appropriate praise to this work is, that it evades no difficulty, and of the problems

which occur solves rightly a proportion, on its peculiar subject, beyond all precedent large. No doubt a severe judge will decide that this book is far from perfect. He will, we think, find there some indistinctness of expression and some diffuseness of explanation, an occasional dogmatism where there is ground for doubt, an excessive averseness to subtle speculation, and a defective appreciation of some moral and religious considerations. But after all abatements have been made, the severest judge will unhesitatingly pronounce that though there have been in England many acute speculators who have by their economical writings gained much credit in their day and generation, three men only have by such means attained permanent rank among the great thinkers of their country, and that these three are Adam Smith, Ricardo, and John Mill.

ESSAY ON THE COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES OF THE STUDY OF ANCIENT AND MODERN LANGUAGES.

(*Written at the Age of Sixteen.*)

THE question, whether Ancient or Modern Languages are best adapted for our Study, considered with regard to the education of youth, possesses considerable practical importance. This is peculiarly the case at this time, when the recent formation of a new University conducted on less exclusive principles and a more extended plan than Oxford and Cambridge, will oblige these venerable institutions to include in their course of Study, subjects now beyond its limits, and to give up enough of their time-hallowed but now obsolete customs, to enable them to keep up with the Spirit of the age.

Before entering on this subject, it may not be amiss to enquire, what in this respect was the condition of the Ancients themselves, and whether they had any peculiar features, which may be derived from the circumstances, in which with respect to this they were placed.

The Greeks are an example of a nation rising to a high place in the scale of literature, without any acquaintance with writers in any tongue save their own. This singular fact formed at once their highest excellence by stamping on all their productions the mark of true genius, originality; and also gave rise to the greatest defect in the Greek mind, verbal quibbling and their great tendency to mistake similarity of expression for real resemblance. With the Romans the case was extremely different. Their standard of literature was partially lowered by too close imitation of their Greek instructors; and therefore with greater refinement of expression, they are very much their inferiors in that vigour which is the

peculiar characteristic of original thought. We have not indeed any specimens of the old Saturnian verse; which, although undoubtedly harsh, might perhaps have atoned in part for this defect, by the vigorous conceptions it contained; and we know certainly from Horace, that in the Augustan age there was a great tendency to prefer these early and home-grown flowers, to the rich exotics which the bards of that period produced.

> "Hos ediscit, et hos arcto stipata theatro
> Spectat Roma potens, habet hos numeratque poetas,"

says Horace speaking of Ennius and the fathers of Roman song; and it must be remembered, that this was no transient impression but that it continued in full force through the best period of the Empire although exposed to the virulent satires of later bards. But be this as it may, the *Æneid* of Virgil is certainly a close imitation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer; and the best phrases in the odes of Horace are merely translations from Simonides and the other eminent lyric poets of Greece.

The Greeks then were a nation almost entirely destitute of acquaintance with foreign literature; and the Romans, a people whose writings were considerably impaired by imitation. And hence it may be concluded that a total disregard of foreign languages has a decidedly bad effect on the mind of a nation; and that a too close attention to one language has a tendency to upset original invention.

The case of our forefathers is another and far worse instance of excessive imitation; this however, was probably unavoidable. When the thick gloom which had hung over the regions of literature during the Middle Ages began to clear away, the only sources whence the requisite light could come was the Greek and Roman languages. Our ancestors studied them deeply, particularly the Latin, and perceiving the barrenness of their mother tongue in words to the literary ideas, and also with a view to make the resemblance of their writings closer to their elegant models, they adopted the Latin language, and but for Chaucer and our earlier bards, there might for a very

considerable period have existed no English literature properly so called at all; but, for the cultivation of poetry, original invention is requisite; men never can become poets by mere imitation; and instead of imitating the style of the classic poets, these rugged bards struck out a line for themselves. They expressed their homely ideas in their native tongue—rugged and unharmonious, it was without doubt at that time; but still it was well calculated to express the forcible but unpolished truths which they sought to inculcate. They have at least the praise of originality, which poems in a dead language must always want; and in reading the simple descriptions of English life and manners which their writings contain, it should be recollected that if Chaucer had not formed our language, our annals would never have been graced by the names of a Milton, a Byron, or a Shakespeare.

The Reformation, and its parent the invention of printing, also produced great effects on the European languages. Luther throughout the whole of his undaunted struggle with the papacy published his tracts in German; and his opponents, rather than leave him in possession of the field, were forced to do the same. The course of events in the other reformed nations was precisely similar; and thus a necessity arose for engrafting on modern language terms expressive of literary ideas. This want was supplied in different ways; but in most cases, as in English and French, by deriving words from the Latin and Greek, or, as in German, by compounding words from the original elements of the language. From the era of the Reformation, modern literature has gradually arisen, although the learned hesitated to give up the use of Latin, and thus open to the mass of the people those stores of information which had before been their exclusive property. The diversity of national character, and other casual circumstances, modified in each state the development of these general causes.

Thus has arisen the difference of the prominent features which characterise the writings of the several states of Europe. At the commencement of the revival of learning, as has been seen, Latin was a kind of universal language to the learned men of Europe. This it has in a great measure ceased to be,

and no other can arise entirely to supply its place in this respect; but the nearest approach made to it is by the French language. This tongue although the compositions it contains are neither so valuable nor so numerous as those which ornament the literature of some other European nations, is peculiarly adapted to conversation; and from this circumstance, and also from the influential position of France on the Continent, it is extensively known throughout the whole of Europe. Hence French is an indispensable acquisition to all who intend to travel beyond the bounds of their own land, and also to hold verbal intercourse with the learned of other nations.

The German contains the most voluminous literature which at present exists, so much so indeed, that a large proportion of the well informed among them are Authors, and the works of each generally extend to a considerable size. Their prose literature is generally devoted to commentaries on ancient writings, and the history of past ages; one reason for this may perhaps be, that their Government has prohibited all those discussions on events, occurring at the present time, which comprise so large a proportion of the British writings. Their poets are also voluminous, but contain great originality of thought combined with grace of expression. Schiller has been styled the most classic dramatist of modern times, and though he is inferior to Shakespeare in that original vigour of thought which is the prominent characteristic of that great dramatist, he excels him in taste and delicacy.

The Italian literature is almost entirely composed of poets, and most of these flourished two centuries ago; nor has the language received any improvement since their time, and the greater part of their modern productions are imitations of these old bards.

Nothing need to be said about the advantages of studying our native literature, and our language, with the three which have been briefly mentioned, are the chief literary languages of Europe. The books written in Russian and other northern tongues, are chiefly translated from French and English works; although the first of these contains some works of considerable reputation on various branches of scientific enquiry, which are

indeed the only subjects on which the strict surveillance of their rulers over the press allows the national mind to exert its unshackled energies. These last mentioned languages then are little worth the trouble of learning, except to those who are going to travel in the North, or have other reasons of a casual nature for their acquisition.

Among the reasons for learning the modern languages, the first and most obvious one is that of communicating with foreigners easily. From what has been said of French as a universal language, it will be seen, that this is almost the only one which it is necessary to learn for this purpose. Another advantage is the insight which several modern tongues give into the roots of our own; in which respect the German is peculiarly important as a kindred tongue to the English; and the Norwegian still more so, as more closely connected with the old Saxon from which all are derived. A competent knowledge of French to all who wish to travel on the Continent, and an extensive acquaintance with German, is desirable for the learned, and is every day becoming more and more so, and a knowledge of Italian is a polite accomplishment which may be learned with considerable advantage; while the other languages are of no importance, except to those who intend residing in the countries where they are spoken.

After this short summary of the advantages attending the acquisition of modern languages, it will be necessary to take a brief review of the most prominent of those which arise from the study of classics.

The first and most important is the one which results from their effects on the youthful mind. It is in youth that most men must lay in the greater part of those stores of information which are in these days required to join with usefulness in society. Studious men must always be rare, and the short intervals which those who are engaged in active life can snatch for study and relaxation, will scarcely suffice for doing more than keeping up a knowledge with the course of passing events. Youth too, is the season of life in which the mind requires to be disciplined, and the intellectual faculties en-

larged. What can be better for this than the study of classics; than extending our ideas by an acquaintance with the sublime works of antiquity, with the productions of those master minds which were our instructors in civilisation? Would not this be a sufficient reason for spending our time in acquiring them, even if, as is sometimes alleged, they are of no use in after life? But this is not the case—classical literature is always alluded to as a subject with which every well-educated man is supposed to be familiar; and they are of great service in giving the mind that polish without which it is impossible to give or receive pleasure in society, and what can compensate for the loss which they experience who are unable to study the writers of antiquity in their original languages? Translations only shine with a reflected light—and in proportion as this light is more or less bright, they present a more or less vivid image of the source whence they derive their borrowed splendour, and to which at best they bear but a pale and shadowy resemblance. But independent of these considerations of the effects of a classical education on the mind, another reason for it is the great assistance which it gives in studying modern languages; in most of which, but especially in French, a classic element has gradually blended with the original root divided from the northern barbarians who overthrew the Roman empire. The terms used in every branch of scientific enquiry are derived from the Greek and Latin, and without a knowledge of these, the meaning of such words will be liable to be constantly forgotten, or at best indistinctly remembered: while their significations are obvious on mere inspection to those who have a competent acquaintance with their primitives in the classic languages.

In the earlier portion of this Essay, those evils were exemplified, which accrued to the Greeks from a total neglect of every language but their own, and also those to which the Romans subjected themselves, by a too extensive study of one language; and in how much more aggravated form our forefathers experienced them, in consequence of their slavish imitation, and boundless admiration of the ancients. It has

also been seen, that from the several reasons which render each of the modern languages in different ways important, that in these days to be unacquainted with them is a great hindrance to the scholar, and to all persons who either intend to travel in foreign lands, or to extend their knowledge to the literature of other nations. But reasons at least equally strong have been alleged to show that the classics are essential to every educated person, alike for their intrinsic elegance, and also for their extensive utility as a groundwork for other pursuits. And hence it may be finally inferred that too great application to the study of either is extremely prejudicial; but that a judicious mean between the two extremes of slavish imitation and total neglect is by far the most desirable course which mankind even in these days pursue. And this course of proceeding is so much the more desirable, as the study of several languages is likely to correct the evils and disadvantages which infallibly result from too close attention to one, however beautiful and elegant that one may be. But it must be remembered that the pursuits of foreign or ancient literature are at best but of secondary importance, and that an ignorance of the best writers of our own language is a neglect which cannot be excused by any acquaintance, no matter how extensive, with the productions of other lands, or older times.

THOUGHTS ON DEMOCRACY.

(Written in Early Youth.)

THERE is little use in attempting to deduce the superior advantages of liberal government from long and obscure metaphysical reasonings about the social contract, framed when men were in the fishing and hunting state; for I cannot but think it very doubtful whether anything like the whole mass of mankind were ever in that condition at once, and if they were not, the contract could not have been agreed to by the whole race, and consequently cannot be binding on them.

The deductions from the social contract are exactly adapted to be set-off against those from the divine right of kings, and in the following part of this paper it is by no means my purpose to rely on either. One great distinction, often lost sight of, but by calm enquirers necessary to be kept in view, is that between *democracy* and *autocracy*, between the rule of the people and the rule of the mob. But these two have very little in common, scarcely anything in fact but that the mob are often persuaded by their demagogue rulers to carry on their designs under the name of the people. Democracy, in its proper sense, is that form by which a wise and enlightened nation govern themselves; it is a government which guarantees equal political rights to all its members; it is a government which effectually provides for the equitable dispensation of justice, and grants, even to the most outrageous political criminal, a fair trial and an opportunity for defence. Autocracy, on the other hand, can scarce be called a government, since it provides no trial, no fair hearing for any criminal—tumultuary prejudice is to be the judge, tumultuary violence the executioner; in it there is no deliberation. The people disdain to govern themselves by the laws, they make their unstable whims their only guide. It is so far from being a free government that it is the only uncontrolled

despotism in existence, for in the most unlimited monarchical despotisms there is the restraint, and it may be a very powerful one, that the people will take up arms to resist the tyranny of their sovereign; but when a mob rules, who can take up arms against them? whence can relief come? where must help be sought? I am aware that this is the topic most enormously insisted on by the opponents of political freedom in general; they reason as if all popular government must generally be of this nature, but I see not why. I do not see why a whole people should not be as likely to govern themselves well as a small knot of individuals could govern them: much more so indeed, for "in proportion as a greater amount of intelligence is directed to a subject" the more light is thrown on it. Those ideas which remained dormant as long as the mind in which they were destined to originate continued solitary may be struck out by the contact of different minds. Can a subject be darkened instead of illuminated by having the light of reason directed to it? does political science differ in this respect from all other sciences? would astronomical science have ever advanced so far if only the labour of one mind had been directed to it? One man must indeed be severally devoted to a particular branch of knowledge, but in a well-constituted mind this will never be to the exclusion of all others. Take the most favourable instance conceivable: Man was sent into the world to govern himself, but intense and exclusive devotion to that object would end in making us all maniacs. It is one great advantage of free government that it opens the way to eminence, to talent, in whatever station it be placed. This advantage is inestimable. Adversity is so much the best and most effectual instructor, that even absolute monarchs, when they have had opportunities of judging, have discovered that ministers selected from the lower ranks were in general more able to be useful in the prosecution of their designs than those whose noble birth and consequent high station have given to them an exemption from its teachings. But how can this choice which may depend on whim, very likely influenced by personal appearance, a gift so fortuitous as never to be relied on by any

in the common affairs of life, how can *such* a choice be compared with that judicious selection of merit which must be the confidence of that merit showing itself? There are certainly certain qualities, certain classes of merit more adapted than others to gain popular favour: but where the predilection for these is the result of calm deliberation and not of hasty whim these qualities will generally be found to be the ones most useful for their stations. What members are of most estimation in the House of Commons? those whose capacity for business is most fully relied on, and the luminous clearness of whose statements immediately places that assembly and the country in a position to judge of their conduct and puts them in immediate possession of the knowledge requisite for deciding on the condition of affairs brought before them and for determining on the course to be pursued. Can it not be believed that these qualities are the ones of greatest utility in managing public business. The reservation which I made in the last paragraph, namely, "that the decision must be the result of calm deliberation, not of hasty whim," contains matter of considerable importance. To secure this is said to be impossible. I deny the fact. The people will be more likely to judge rightly than a small body of individuals, if they can but be brought to give due attention to the subject. They are notoriously more liable to be led away from the path of their true interest, but if they are allowed *time* for lengthened consideration, they will soon return to it: this can only be secured by delegating to an assembly of moderate members those powers which a whole people cannot in a state of considerable diversity conveniently exercise; if the measures adopted by this assembly be good, when submitted to the judgment of the people they will be applauded. I say when submitted to the people, by this meaning when, as in the English House of Commons, by periodical elections the constituents are called to decide on the conduct of their members, whether they will or will not continue to be represented by them. In this way the decision of the people is the ultimate tribunal before which the rulers must be weighed, by which decision they must stand or fall.

ON THE CHARACTER OF MIRABEAU AND HIS INFLUENCE ON HIS AGE.

(*Written in Early Youth.*)

MIRABEAU was the first great character brought to light by the French Revolution. He partook strongly of the peculiar spirit of the times. The new opinions, which claimed to the exclusion of all others the character of philosophical, had taken deep root in his mind, and had borne their most fatal fruit—religious scepticism. On political questions his views were far more correct, as far as they were fixed. He by no means went the extravagant length of Rousseau, and his more devoted followers, who scarcely tolerated the bonds of society itself, rejected without scruple all aristocratic distinctions and ridiculed the fundamental principles of monarchy and representation. Mirabeau's views went no farther than the erection of a kingly commonwealth like that of England. He would have eradicated without scruple the oppressive pecuniary privileges of the feudal *noblesse;* he would have opened to the *tiers état* a chance of rising to the highest stations in the country, then wholly denied to them. But he would not have demanded of the nobility to coalesce with the commons, and to relinquish their right to vote in a separate chamber, which they possessed in England, the most democratic of feudal monarchies. Mirabeau seems to have shared the favour with which universal suffrage was then regarded in France. He seems to have regarded political power as a right, not as a trust: an error very excusable in a nation just emerging from despotism, who have experienced all the evils of exclusion from a share in the government; but very pernicious when those who hold it deem themselves obliged to extend any power to those classes of the community whose ignorance and credulity unfit them for its

exercise. All are entitled to receive this trust who show themselves worthy of it, and those who have abused it may rightfully be excluded from its possession.

The bane of Mirabeau was his excessive vanity. The Grand Monarque in past times had been the idol of the French people. That age had passed away. D'Alembert, in 1780, on the birth of the Dauphin, said, "I am old enough to remember when such an event would have excited transports of joy, but the people now regard the birth of a new master with great indifference". This homage, it was thought by Mirabeau, was more justly due to the leader in the national Assembly, and it was his aim to be himself that leader, and to engross the popular applause. He rose to be dreaded and feared; his sarcasm was the dread of his rivals, and the Assembly was led by his skill in selecting those topics that had most influence on their understanding, and those modes of presenting them most calculated to move their sympathy. But before his death, "The great treason of the Count of Mirabeau" resounded in the streets of Paris. At that momentous stage of the Revolution when in the Assembly the members of the Jacobin Club, thirty in number, and afterwards so fatally celebrated, dared to express disapprobation at his opposition to the cruelties towards the emigrants, he exclaimed, "Your murmurs are unavailing; to please you is my happiness, to warn you my duty; the popularity which I desire is not a feeble twig fanned by the breath of momentary favour; it is an oak whose roots are spread in the soil—that is to say, fixed on the immutable basis of justice and liberty. I understand the vexation of those who, now so ardent, or rather so perfidious, in their love of freedom, would be puzzled to tell when it arose in their bosoms." At these concluding words, a violent uproar was made among the Jacobins. "Silence those thirty voices," cried Mirabeau in a voice of thunder, and it was instantly quelled: such was his power when exerted in the cause of order, to which he wished to devote the last years of life. "I would not wish," he said, "to be always employed in the work of destruction," and with this view he had allied himself to the sinking cause of monarchy when death cut short his plans. If his life had been prolonged

he might have preserved the throne. The boldness of his genius and the grandeur of his plans mark him out as the only man who was equal to the achievement. A part of his plan the King attempted to execute when deprived by death of his aid, and fled to Varennes. But it was in vain—the mainspring of the enterprise was gone—the head that had planned it was laid in the tomb, and the soul whose unrivalled daring alone was equal to its execution was fled for ever. When every incident is attractive, it is difficult to avoid tediousness, but some notice is required by the more prominent points of his career, and a few of his sayings must be mentioned to show the character of his eloquence.

On his death-bed, he exclaimed to Dumont, "How right were we, my friend, to oppose the *tiers état* in their attempt to adopt the title of States General; since that day they have done nothing but show themselves unworthy of it". His whole death scene, though clouded by the dim uncertainty which his rejection of revelation shed over the future, is exceedingly affecting. It is the effort of a great soul by its own unaided strength to preserve that calmness which Christianity has placed within the reach of the weakest and the humblest.

The connection of Mirabeau with the Duc d'Orléans, "whose name is infamy," has been a question much argued. That he had some intercourse with him can scarcely be doubted after a due examination of the evidence, but who can believe that he placed any reliance on a fickleness so wayward, or that he preferred the unmingled blackness of his character to the good intentions, mildness, and conscientious though mistaken patriotism of Louis? The influence of the Duke on the Revolution was unmixed evil, but that evil has been overrated. He squandered his fortune in corrupting the populace, but the despotism of centuries had laid the train; and though had he never existed, though the whole royal family had united round the King, some other sparks would have gone forth and scattered their league to the winds. The most unfortunate scene in Mirabeau's career is the sitting of the 23rd of June. The King on that occasion presented a free constitution to France, and mainly through Mirabeau's means it was refused.

There is, it is true, another side to the question. No exculpation can be attempted for the fatal imprudence of the King, much less for the secret treachery of his courtiers whose dearest wish was the failure of the Revolution. The alterations from the draft which Neckar had prepared were so great that the Minister sent in his resignation and absented himself from the Assembly at the important moment when he was most wanted for its defence. At the conclusion of his speech the King desired the Assembly to break up for that day, and he himself immediately left the hall. The members of the *tiers état* did not follow him, for Mirabeau was addressing them on their wrongs in a speech of unequalled power. The master of the ceremonies, the Marquis de Breze, entered to remind them, as he said, of the King's intentions. When his message had been delivered a murmur of disapprobation ran through the Assembly, but all hesitated to reply. Then Mirabeau started from his seat and exclaimed with the thunder of his powerful voice, "Yes, sir, we have heard the intentions of the King, and you who cannot be his agent at the States General, you who have here neither seat nor voice, are not the person to remind us of his speech. Go! tell your master that we are here by the power of the people, and that nothing save the point of the bayonet shall expel us!" With an official answer in this spirit, the messenger retired. There is something very spirited and undaunted in this reply, but was it wise? or was it even just? Even if the Assembly should be ultimately obliged to reject this constitution, ought the irrevocable resolution to have been taken in a moment of excitement? The question was a momentous one. It could never have been the proper moment for decision, when the plan was but just laid before them, and could not have been digested in their minds. The King should not, undoubtedly, have concluded with a proposition so unskilful as the order to adjourn immediately. A party decision was by this means rendered unavoidable, which the monarch's interest most expressly forbade. But after all, should the Assembly have thrust back the King's proffers with such disdain? Doubtless the plan was in some respects defective, but should they not

have forgiven this as exactly what they had to expect, and trusted to the progress of time and the gradual diffusion of more enlightened views for their correction? The duty of the Assembly was to secure the firm establishment of a regular system of representation. When they had done this, they had done all that was absolutely needful; but they desired to do everything in a moment; time-hallowed opinions were swept away, ancient institutions interwoven with the people's every-day life were overthrown, and the consequence was the reign of terror. But to return to Mirabeau—was his conduct on this occasion noble? surely not. He yielded to his passions when he should have restrained them with his whole strength; he should have stood between the prince and the people, and perhaps the plague might have been stayed, but he rather chose to scatter the seeds of the pestilence. Public obloquy is cast on the incendiary of a private dwelling, how much rather on him who wantonly lets loose the all-consuming fire on the constitution of a state! Mirabeau by no means deserves a censure so undiscriminating, but even his desire for the public good which was doubtless for the most part the most influential sentiment in his bosom, will not exempt him from a large portion of the censure due to those who helped to bring on the appalling calamities that ensued.

I have delayed perhaps too long on this incident, but it is an important and at the same time an attractive one. It will be unnecessary to dwell at any length on any subsequent occasion, though there are few in which the character of Mirabeau is not presented more favourably for his own fame. The principal points of his subsequent life are the following: The address for the removal of the troops whom the courtiers had persuaded the King to assemble round Paris, under pretence of quelling the disorders of the populace, but the real object of which in the plan of the Queen and her associates was to secure a return to the old régime by a counter-revolution or if necessary by a civil war. Here, his conduct was truly patriotic, and gave France a chance for liberty, which she squandered in her haste for an over-early enjoyment of its fruits. His next great measure was the Riot Act, which was

founded on that of England, though it was more favourable to the magistrate, as it did not compel him to risk his life in reading it to the assembled mob, but required them to disperse on the display of a red flag placed in some conspicuous position.

This act was only executed once by the authorities during the Revolution, and then it completely quelled the disturbance and so daunted its chief author, Robespierre, that he implored his commune for protection. But he exacted a deep and a bloody revenge. Bailly, the presiding magistrate, on that occasion was for his obedience to the law executed during the reign of terror. If it had been rightly and regularly enforced, and combined with the suppression of the democratic clubs, France might have been preserved, and the cause of freedom would not have been stained with crimes and cruelties which must now be her reproach as long as history endures to tell of her shame. Mirabeau concurred in the reforms of the 4th of August, which redressed most of the real evils of France. The national debt is the chief exception, and to remedy this Mirabeau had also a scheme which, though obvious, would have been very beneficial. He prevailed on the Assembly to pass a decree in virtue of which one-fourth of the whole property of France would have been subscribed and converted into a fund for its liquidation. This proposition was at first very coldly received, but the eloquence of its author was excited to the utmost, and the bill was passed with great enthusiasm. The disorders of France, however, ensued; it was never acted on. The revolutionary leaders learned to despise public faith, and the debt was subsequently cancelled with no regard to the interests of the creditor.

This is but an instance of the general course of the Revolution. The views of the earlier leaders were wise and comparatively moderate, but the fury of the populace prevented all moderate and salutary reform, which they had been taught to despise. Mirabeau assisted in unloosing the people's ancient chains, and he instilled into their minds the flattering notion that they were the rightful sovereigns of the earth. A wise and calm nation long inured to a free government and

who had been trained up in equal laws and instructed in just and religious sentiments would have found it difficult to resist ideas so artfully insinuated and so seductive in themselves. The French nation has none of these characteristics, and much less the populace of Paris, who were the prime rulers of all events; the fitness of the latter for freedom may be judged from their indignant complaints against the Parisian magistracy for having with unwonted energy delivered out of their hands some miserable wretch whom they had doomed for no crime to a barbarous death: "Is this," said they, "our freedom, when we can no longer hang whom we please?" I cannot refrain from adding one other illustration; it was the common tone of the drawing-room circles of Paris, what a "charming thing is a revolution". No trait of French character is so unfavourable as this manner of treating the most awful question imposed on human responsibility, as this readiness to sound the depths of a gulf from whose shore the greatest and most wary statesmen retire with fear and dread and with a firm consciousness that their utmost skill cannot stem its breakers.

Mirabeau also supported the decree for the abolition of tithes. It is unnecessary here to enter on the general question of the sacredness attaching to property vested by past ages in the national church. It is amply sufficient to claim the right which has always been exercised in England for the State's interference to prevent its extravagant increase, by whatever enactments it may think most fitting. But in all sudden changes of system regard must be had to the interests of those who have been induced by the long-standing and apparent firmness of the old system to devote their lives to the performance of whatever services it may require.

This the Constituent Assembly neglected to do. They confiscated at once ecclesiastical property to the amount of sixteen millions sterling, and made in requital but a very inadequate provision for religious instruction in future. The Church of France had become exceedingly corrupt; the very humble salaries of the *curés* and the extravagant incomes and unbounded luxury of the bishops attracted universal attention, and as the higher situations were only open to the nobles, the

tiers état had no motive to preserve wealth to whose accumulation they contributed, but in the enjoyment of which they had no share. On the free passing of this decree Mirabeau made his celebrated observation, "There are but three ways of subsisting—to beg, to rob, and to be salaried". He disposed of the difficulty of private property in a very summary manner. "Property," he said, "is the price which society pays a man for the distribution he makes to others in the shape of his consumption and expenses." The insecurity on which all thè fruits of industry rest is not a little appalling. For if we have to beg them, they may be refused; if to rob for them, their acquisition may be rightfully resisted; and if they are a salary, as Mirabeau probably meant to assert, it is quite sufficient to say to any man that the State has no further need of his "consumption and expenses," and whatever be his former fortune he may be rightfully left to starve on the public road. Very small safety is here provided for that on which, as a great writer has expressed it, "the consent of mankind has stamped the titles of Sacred and inviolable," and on the stability of which every human action depends. If this was the view taken of private property, very little safety could be anticipated for that of the clergy, whom there was no disposition in the public mind to regard with favour.

The cruelty evinced towards the clergy is fully worthy the name of persecution, and would sully a fame otherwise far brighter than that of the Constituent Assembly. It was indeed reserved for its successor to applaud undisguised professions of atheism, but "those who sow the wind must reap the whirlwind"; they deprived the people of their pastors and of every means of instruction, and they erected no adequate substitute, and they had no right to be surprised at their appalling ignorance and their rejection of God. The heroic and almost saint-like conduct of the clergy was unappreciated by the Parisian mob, and they were the rulers of France. In the provinces, indeed, their sufferings excited more sympathy, but every noble, every natural chief of the peasantry was in exile, and their efforts in their pastors' behalf were few, weak, and ineffectual.

It is impossible to keep from digression on themes so interesting and so attractive. Mirabeau's career in public life was a brief one, though it was at a time when days did the work of years. No long time elapsed between these events and his junction with the court, the consequences of which have already been described as fully as the design of this essay will permit. The remainder of it will be devoted to an examination more in detail of the most marked features of his character.

It is not too much to say that a very striking resemblance of Mirabeau would be formed by the union of the best parts of the mind of Chatham with the worst parts of the mind of Sheridan. The fiery soul, the dauntless courage, the unpremeditated but heart-stirring eloquence of Chatham find their counterparts in Mirabeau, and the Phillipics against Walpole, and the "System of Subsidies" were not perhaps far inferior in execution to those which shook the court of Versailles and daunted the Jacobin Club; and their subjects were immeasurably inferior: but there was wholly wanting the stainless purity and the uncorrupt integrity which in an age of shameless profligacy raised the first William Pitt so far over every rival; and in their stead there was the laxity of principle and the undisciplined desires and unregulated passions which were so ill-combined with the lofty moral sentiments of his brighter moods, and which blighted the usefulness of Sheridan and sullied his fame. Mirabeau had a maxim that morality on a small scale was incompatible with its possession on one more extended, or as he enunciated it, "La petite morale était ennemie de la grande"; a very lamentable exhibition of the errors consequent on the rejection of a religion which prescribes the performance of private duties and the culture of the milder and domestic virtues as well as those more conspicuous ones that are exhibited to the eye of the world, and which, though by no means always more difficult, are always repaid with a far higher earthly guerdon. In common with Chatham, Mirabeau had a predominating influence on the Assembly whenever he put forth his whole mental power; with neither did any contemporary dare to measure himself in

the direct conflict of sarcasm, neither could any adversary retort with effect to the lamentable inconsistencies which their conduct and opinions too often displayed.

Both were destitute of the qualities most requisite to form a great party leader. The manners of both were unconciliating and occasionally harsh, and the office demands more attention to individuals and more careful consideration for petty interests than either could be persuaded to bestow. For want of this, Chatham fell, and Mirabeau, though his life was too short to exhibit its full effects, felt it also. With Sheridan, Mirabeau had also in common that love of dramatic effect, the distinguishing bane of the French nation, but shared not that sparkling and epigrammatic wit which in early youth produced "The Rivals" and "The School for Scandal" and delighted the House of Commons in riper manhood. Mirabeau was distinguished by nothing so much as by quickness and rapidity of thought. His finest eloquence was without premeditation. Many of the best set speeches which he read from the Tribune were the composition of others. In most of his literary productions, he had the aid of those better acquainted with the subjects treated of than himself. From them he gained the facts, and in conversation with them obtained the clearest and best lights in which they could be regarded, but the nervous eloquence with which he clothed them was his own, and so was also the copious illustration by means of which he made the ideas which he wished to enforce as clear to others as to himself, and in these he has never been surpassed. In such a character it is easy for an invidious eye to scan defects without number. He had no power of patient attention—a short paroxysm of violent labour he could endure, hut be was wholly incapable of the long-continued exertion of mind necessary for the production of a great work. His appetite for praise was enormous, and his rejection of religion had shut him out from those higher motives of action which so much tend to check some part of its influence and to elevate the character of what remains. His ardent love of virtue did not preserve him from vicious indulgence. He wished for the advancement of truth, but avowed his conviction that her cause